LYRIC FORMS FROM FRANCE

THEIR HISTORY AND THEIR USE

BY

HELEN LOUISE COHEN

Author of *The Ballade*

WITH AN ANTHOLOGY OF

Ballades
Chants Royal
Rondels
Rondeaus
Triolets
Villanelles
Sestinas

IN ENGLISH VERSE

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To

MY MOTHER

The note, I trowe, maked was in Fraunce.

—*Geoffrey Chaucer.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LYRIC FORMS FROM FRANCE
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I

INTRODUCTION

Those who make a practice of reading poetry, even in a desultory way, are likely to be able to identify at least one fixed verse form. That a sonnet has fourteen lines is a matter of common knowledge to many people, even though they may ignore its elaborate rhyme system. The sonnet, coming originally from Italy, is the most frequent of all fixed verse forms in English, but the ballade and the rondeau have in the last fifty years become increasingly familiar. The poems that belong to what might be called the ballade and the rondeau families, and the lyric that is known as a villanelle, originated in France, the sestina in Provence. To the ballade family belong the ballade itself, the chant royal, the ballade à double refrain, and the double ballade. Of the rondeau family, the triolet is the earliest ancestor known, and from it have developed in more or less chronological order the rondel, the rondeau, and the rondeau redoublé. All of these forms are characterized by a refrain, a group of lines, a single line, or a phrase, recurring at regular intervals. The villanelle, likewise, which belongs to a much later literary generation, is a refrain poem. The sestina is built up, also, on the principle of repetition in the verse pattern, but in the case of the Provençal form it is a matter of the repetition of single words in an intricate scheme, rather than of the recurrence of an easily recognized refrain.

The reader with a taste for poetry who is interested also in the drama, remembering Rostand's play of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, may recall that Cyrano fights a duel, at one point in the action, with the foppish and foolish Vicomte de Valvert, who has assailed Cyrano's ears with the contemptuous epithet of poet, and that Cyrano responds by admitting, forsooth, that he is a poet, but that he is also a fighter and that in order to uphold both of his claims he will engage the Vicomte in a duel, the while he times his sword thrusts to an impromptu ballade; and how Cyrano pleasingly suggests that the Vicomte does not know what a ballade is, anyway, but that a ballade in truth is composed of three stanzas of eight lines and an envoy of four, and that it is necessary for Cyrano to take great care in choosing the rhymes in advance, because no new rhymes can be introduced after the three appearing in the first stanza have been settled upon, and that the words which he announces, amusingly enough, for the refrain of his impromptu ballade, are, "At the last line of the envoy I shall break through your guard and pink you," or, as the line runs in French, "Qu'à la fin de l'envoy je touche."

John McCrae's *In Flanders Fields*, the most frequently quoted and widely known of all the poems produced during the Great War, is a rondeau. The features of the rondeau were once enumerated by the seventeenth century poet Voiture in the form itself, and it is this poem which Austin Dobson has imitated in the following lines:

> You bid me try, blue eyes, to write
> A rondeau. What!—forthwith—to-night?
> Reflect. Some skill I have, 'tis true;
> But thirteen lines—and rhymed on two—
> "Refrain," as well. Ah, hapless plight!

Still, there are five lines—ranged aright.
These Gallic bonds, I feared, would fright
My easy Muse. They did till you—
You bid me try!

This makes them nine. The port's in sight;
'Tis all because your eyes are bright!
Now, just a pair to end with 'oo'—
When maids command, what can't we do?
Behold! the rondeau—tasteful, light—
You bid me try!

It is quite possible for the apprentice in poetry, after consulting a handbook of poetics or a treatise on the mechanics of French or English verse, to use the ballade and the rondeau, which have become poetic patterns for both French and English versifiers, as mere metrical exercises. The very rigidity of the rules that prescribe their structure makes them attractive alike to poet and poetaster. But these forms are, after all, most significant to the student of literary history, be he poet or critic, to whom the group of French fixed verse forms suggest the high romance and glamorous enchantment of a colorful and picturesque state of society.

In the literature of the Middle Ages, the poet frequently represented himself as rapt from consciousness by a vision of other worlds and of events, past and future. Dante, to name the most illustrious example, employed his vision to interpret the universe. If the author of the most casual and commonplace experiments in the ballade or rondeau should, in the fashion of the Middle Ages, conceive himself as beholding in a dream the fair past of these forms, the vision might outline itself in this summary fashion: Before his eyes, turned back to medieval France, would tower the gray battlements of a castle rising from green fields—"an outpost of winter" in a world of spring—arched over by a deep blue sky, outlined against a background of fragrant fruit trees in blossom, the rough walls echoing

to the sound of bird song mingling with the music of viol and lute. And this setting might be peopled, still in the dream, by multicolored groups of men and women, kindled by spring magic to engage once more in the games and rites of the season. And these ceremonies would assume the guise of dances, and every time, as the same evolution in the pattern of the dance repeated itself, would come the same strain of music and the same phrase of song. But a vision of this sort, after all, would not go to the root of the matter. The dreamer might well be rudely roused from his picture world by the rumbling of a heavy truck, or the bleating echo of an automobile horn, before he had had a chance, like the central figure in the *Divine Comedy*, to evolve a cosmos, or, smaller enterprise, to penetrate in his dream, the origins of refrain poetry, in general, or the connection of fixed verse forms such as the ballade and the rondeau with the spring rites of the early folk of France.

The beginnings of refrain poetry is an interesting subject for speculation. By and large, it is true that the refrain in the literature of any language goes back to a far earlier stage of civilization than is represented by the most hoary of written records. The refrain, like so many persistent survivals in modern life and literature, is a relic of a folk still applying primitive methods to agriculture and industry, still under the spell of a primitive religion. The medieval ladies and gentlemen, emerging in the poet's vision from their gray castle on to the greensward to circle about in the spring sunshine, are by many stages removed from the state of society in which the simple folk of a countryside assembled at crossroads or market place to make the best possible terms at the beginning of summer, with the gods of life and fertility. The choral song of these assemblies is the very earliest form of all poetry. If we

judge from the analogy of other primitive peoples, it is very certain that sophisticated and artistic poetic forms, like the ballade and the rondel, which employ a regular refrain, are in the direct line of a long descent from choral folk-songs, in which the people of the village coöperated with an accomplished leader in raising the dance-song which accompanied their movements.

The primitive dance-song was probably composed of single lines of text alternating with the refrain. In course of time the number of lines was in all likelihood increased, and one or more of them made to rhyme with the refrain. This process went on, no doubt, because verses that went hand in hand with the dance would naturally be adapted to the music. The repetition of a favorite tune would compel those supplying the words to furnish successive line groups necessarily alike in structure. To provide variety, the refrain was gradually introduced into the stanza itself, but at first there were no rules governing either the form of the refrain or its place in the stanza. Only the exigencies of the rhyme in any way affected its position. The fragments of dance-songs that are left are not older than the thirteenth century. While they reflect the manner of the old popular dance-songs of the peasants, it is certainly true that in the form in which we know them, the form given them by courtly poets, the trouvères, the form that was made to accompany the dance in the halls of great nobles, they were aristocratic and not popular. In the extant refrains, recognized as fragments of an older poetry, the allusions to the dance are innumerable. The oldest text to contain such refrains is *Guillaume de Dôle*, written between 1210 and 1215, an aristocratic romance describing seigneurial celebrations. This romance is interspersed with lyric fragments. Similar lyric fragments came to serve as refrains in the *balletes*, to be referred to later.

II

DEVELOPMENT OF THE BALLADE

The word *ballade*, often spelled *balade* in the Middle Ages, was derived from the Provençal term *balada*. The *balada* was itself an artistic and not a folk dance-song. In Provence the term was, in general, used to describe almost any kind of artistic dance-song, irrespective of form, and was not applied exclusively to any single kind. The best known *balada* is the one which begins "A l'entrada del tems clar," and belongs to the middle of the thirteenth century. Its first stanza, here quoted, illustrates a stage in the development of the stanza of an artistic dance-song similar, probably, to that which the ballade underwent. The stanza is here arranged to indicate the lines sung by the leader and the parts in which the chorus joined:

The Soloist	The Chorus
A l'entrada del tems clar	*Eya!*
Per joia recomençar	*Eya!*
E per jelos irritar	*Eya!*
Vol la regina mostrar	
Qu'el es si amorosa	

CHORUS

Alavi', alavia, jelos, jelos
Laissaz nos
Laissaz nos
Ballar entre nos, entre nos

With the return of fair weather, runs the song, the queen of the festival, that she may savor joy once more and arouse jealousy, vaunts her love. "Out of my way, out of my way, jealous creatures," she cries; "let us carry on the dance and dance and dance by our-

selves." These words may well have lent themselves to dramatic illustration.

The old French analogue of the *balada* was called *ballete*, a compromise, probably, between *balada* and the French *ballet*, a diminutive of *bal*, meaning dance. These *balletes*, also artistic dance-songs composed before the middle of the thirteenth century, were, some of them, three-stanza poems with refrains, but they presented the additional feature of identical rhymes running through all three stanzas. They incorporated, as has been said, refrains which, copied from those of traditional poetry, had become the stock-in-trade of the trouvères. At least one hundred and eight of these *balletes* are contained in a single manuscript which is, as a matter of fact, the only place where the word has been discovered. The surviving *balletes*, like the surviving examples of the *balada*, are not, in reality, popular poetry. Though there are other and longer songs in the thirteenth century with uniform rhyme schemes throughout, there seems every reason to believe that the ballade took its three stanzas with common rhymes and refrains, from the *ballete*.

The earliest ballades are found, often with the music to which they were sung, in the romances of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, and in the works of Jehannot de Lescurel, a little-known poet of not later than the middle of the fourteenth century. These early ballades are without the envoy which later became a regular feature of the fixed form and frequently have refrains consisting of several lines. The reduction of the refrain to one line came about gradually. As early as 1339 in a poem mourning the death of William, a count of Hainault, which is called *Li Regret Guillaume*, there are thirty ballades, all of which have a single-line refrain. Five show seven-syllable lines; thirteen, eight-syllable lines; one, nine-syllable

lines; and eleven used the ten-syllable line. Both the frequent use of the ten-syllable line and the single-line refrain show that the writer, Jehan de la Mote, belongs decidedly to the generation of Deschamps. It was Deschamps who, before dying in the first decade of the fifteenth century, composed about twelve hundred ballades, the greater number of which showed the one-line refrain.

In *Li Regret Guillaume*, the hero, who is a trouvère, is represented as hastening to a *puy d'amour* in order to submit a love song. It was indeed in these very *puys d'amour* and in the earlier religious *puys*, both poetic guilds of the thirteenth century and later, that the ballade of three stanzas with common rhymes and a refrain, came to be diversified and complicated in line structure and rhyme. In the *puys*, too, the envoy, which had hitherto been a feature of several kinds of songs, became attached to the ballade, so that, after the opening of the fourteenth century, a ballade, whether composed in a *puy* or not, almost inevitably contained a conventional address to the Prince in the first line of the envoy. These same *puys* saw the development of the chant royal, and of other forms with envoy.

The history of the word *pui* or *puy* is uncertain. It has been derived from the Latin *podium*, meaning "elevation," and in this sense has been supposed to refer to the platform on which the officials of the concourse sat. Other critics have derived the word from the name of the town in Velay. Some of the supporters of this latter theory believe that pilgrims from every part of France spread the fame of the Virgin of Le Puy in Velay until numerous religious societies named in her honor sprang up in northern France. Others hold that a literary society actually existed in the town of Le Puy which was the model for similar societies in the North. Or it is possible to consider the more usual

meaning of the Latin *podium*, namely mountain, and recall the allegory of Muses residing on a remote peak. This theory supposes that the term *puy*, signifying mountain, represented to religious and secular poets the heights to which they aspired to raise the subject which they were treating. As early as 1051, there was authorized a *confrérie* of minstrels at the Sainte-Trinité de Fécamp in Normandy. According to their charter, the purpose of their association was masses, alms, vigils, and prayers. Yearly on St. Martin's Day they walked in a procession with the monks. At a later date *puys* are known to have existed in Valenciennes, Arras, Rouen, Caen, Amiens, Abbéville, Dieppe, Douai, Cambray, Evreu, Lille, Bethune, and London.

All the *puys* of the Middle Ages were originally religious in character. Their foundation was usually attributed to clerks who had had miraculous visions of the Virgin. Gradually these religious fraternities evolved into literary societies, chambers of rhetoric, and academies, with only a faint coloring of their religious purpose left. The "confrérie de Notre-Dame des Ardents" at Arras claimed to go back to the Virgin's gift of a healing candle to two minstrels during a pest in 1105. Early in the thirteenth century, so the account runs, a religious guild was founded at Arras in memory of this miracle. The statutes of the society express its purpose to save the "ardans qui ardoisent du fu d'enfer," "those brands burning in the fires of hell." Every member was to attend the meetings held three times a year, to pay dues, to succor his comrades in poverty, to follow them to the grave, and to pay a forfeit if any of these duties was neglected. In this society, which never lost its original religious character, the members classified as trouvères, the professional poets, were held first in dignity. In this *puy* at Arras, the president of the association was called "Prince," and to him, as representing

the whole corporation, the envoys of poems, composed before and after the vogue of the ballade, were frequently addressed. This office was probably elective, and would be held only by a rich man, because a "Prince" was expected to pay the expenses of any dramatic enterprises, to fee the clergy who officiated at ceremonies, and to entertain generously. The brotherhood of the *puy* founded in London at the close of the thirteenth century or at the beginning of the fourteenth century, was, of course, modeled on these French *confréries*.

The English society received from the city great privileges in connection with the Chapel of St. Mary near Guildhall, which was built toward the close of Edward I's reign. The society was religious, convivial, and literary. Its convivial aspects, feasts and processions, seem most prominent, but masses and almsgiving and a yearly literary contest also received attention. On this occasion a crown was awarded to the composer of the best *chancoun reale*, probably chant royal. Search of promising manuscript collections has failed to reveal any of the poems presented to the English *puy*. It is not unlikely, however, that both the ballade and the chant royal may have figured in its latest contests, if not in English, perhaps in French. The sessions of this *puy* seem to have ceased after the fourteenth century.

The last important contribution to the structure of the ballade was thus the envoy, addressed or dedicated to the Prince, which, in the course of poetical contests, was added in the *puys* in the late fourteenth century. Thereafter, chambers of rhetoric and individual poets might vary the length of the line, contrive elaborate rhyme ornaments, or adapt the ballade to express various ideas and perform many functions, but, with the addition of the envoy, the form was fixed in its essential features.

The ballade took roughly about four centuries to

develop from an indeterminate dance-song to a fixed verse form. The structure of the ballade stanza was complete by the fourteenth century. We get an idea of what the various stages in the development were from the *balada* and the *ballete*. To the latter the ballade owes probably its three stanzas with uniform rhyme scheme and refrain. Other probable contributions to the form of the ballade are to be found in the *chansonniers*, the song collections of the thirteenth century, which contain poems with identical rhymes running through a number of stanzas; there were, too, especially in multi-stanza poems composed for presentation in the *puys*, envoys in which trouvères, judges, and other notabilities were addressed by name. In the late thirteenth century, three-stanza refrain poems, with the same rhymes throughout, were written and named *balades*, and, as the fourteenth century progressed, the refrains of many lines that had characterized the ballade, in the romances and elsewhere, were generally reduced to one line. At length, at the close of the same century, the envoy, with its conventional salute to the "Prince," was annexed, and the ballade became in France a favorite poetic type for at least two centuries to come.

The ballade in the late Middle Ages captured the taste of France and even had a certain vogue in England. In the former country from the end of the fourteenth to the beginning of the sixteenth century it attained incredible popularity. Moreover, like its successor in favor, the sonnet, it came to be written in more or less closely connected sequences. With the importation into France in the sixteenth century of ideas derived ultimately from the literature of classical antiquity, the vogue of the ballade grew less pronounced until before the nineteenth century it was more or less sporadic in French literature. Then Théodore de Banville was the instrument by which it was revived. In England the

ballade vanished with the generation after Chaucer, not to reappear there until 1873.

When once the poetic guilds of Northern France had codified the requirements for a ballade such as Cyrano improvises, the essential features of that form were no longer a matter of device. A poet who set out to write a ballade had to find a subject which could be treated in a kind of verse distinguished for its rigid and repetitious rhyme scheme. He deliberately limited his range of ideas by his decision to conform to elaborate and definite restrictions. Technique was distinctly his problem. The success of his ballade depended upon his ability to submit his inspiration to an inflexible set of fixed metrical requirements. If Chaucer, Villon, and Swinburne succeeded in producing ballades that are great poetry, it is because they found the form uniquely harmonious with certain ideas which they wished to express.

III

THE BALLADE IN FRANCE FROM THE END OF THE FOURTEENTH TO THE MIDDLE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

It would take a long time and much space merely to enumerate those who wrote ballades in France from the end of the fourteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century. But there are certain conspicuous names connected with the history of the form.

In Guillaume de Machault's (1300?-1377) lifetime the ballade and the rondel established themselves. He is generally considered the founder of the school of poetry that devoted its energies to the fixed forms. His most interesting work, *Livre du Voir-dit*, a tale told in prose and verse of a disappointing love affair that, as an old man, he had with the young girl, Péronnelle

d'Armentières, contains many ballades and rondels. His writings, like those of Deschamps and Froissart, were known to Chaucer, and on all three Chaucer drew freely. As John Livingston Lowes has said: "The Middle Ages . . . had practically no sense whatever of literary property as we conceive it. . . . The works of other men, in fact, stood on practically the same footing to a writer as the works of God."

Eustache Deschamps (1345?-1405), spoken of generally as a disciple of Machault's, not only holds the record for the number of ballades composed by any one individual, but is also credited with over two hundred rondeaus, not to speak of his tireless exertions in the composition of longer biographical verse and satire. He was the author, too, in 1392, of the earliest Poetics in French, *L'Art de Dictier et de fere chançons, balades, virelais, et rondeaulx.*

Jean Froissart (1338-1404?), like Deschamps and Machault, used verse for autobiographical purposes. He lived as a boy in Valenciennes where every year there was a fête of the *puy d'amour*, and he was often present, no doubt, as the contending poets submitted their verses to be judged before the court that was in the future to crown his own efforts. When he went to the court of Edward III in England, he took with him letters of introduction to Queen Philippa. For her court he wrote virelays and ballades. Other ballades of his were written to be laid at the feet of the lady whom he worshipped with all the shifts of courtly love, but who became permanently alienated from him. Froissart's reputation rests on his *Chronicles* of the wars of his own time, annals of the age of chivalry, rather than on his lyric verse.

Christine de Pisan, woman of letters, was, in spite of her name, born in Venice about 1363. She came to France as a youngster, married in due time, and at

the age of twenty-five was left a penniless widow with three children. Thereafter she had to earn her living by writing. Besides her serious biographical and philosophical works, she is noted for her delicate love verse cast in the conventional poetic moulds of the late Middle Ages.

The most engaging literary figures of the fifteenth century are Charles d'Orléans (1391-1465), the father of Louis XII, and François Villon (1431-1470?), the first a member of the royal house, the second a vagabond. When Charles appeared at Orléans in July, 1460, with his daughter Marie, then three years old, Villon was released from prison in honor of the occasion and wrote a poetic eulogy comparing the little girl to Cassandra, Echo, Judith, Lucrece and Dido.

Charles d'Orléans, who spent twenty-five years as a prisoner in England after the battle of Agincourt, returned to France in 1440 and settled at Blois, surrounding himself there with kindred spirits who enjoyed matching wits in the composition of ballades and rondeaus. The writings of Charles were not published till the eighteenth century. The rondeaus, especially the lovely and often translated one, beginning

> Le temps a laissié son manteau
> De vent, de froidure et de pluye

are works of genius. The conjecture that Villon once sojourned at Blois with the royal poet is based on a ballade, attributed to Villon, the refrain of which is the famous, "I perish of thirst at the fountain brim," a paradox which formed the basis of numerous exercises in the fixed forms in the little court at Blois.

Villon, prince of poets, Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts of the University of Paris, spent various periods of his lawless life in prison. The pardon granted him on one such occasion has been mentioned. At the accession of Louis XI he is again one of those benefiting

from a proclamation of amnesty. Villon's poetry, especially his *Testament*, makes the existence of that fermenting underworld that rose to the surface in France at the close of the eighteenth century very real. In *Le Testament* (1461?), Villon, as he had in his earlier poem *Les Lais*, bequeaths imaginary satirical legacies to his friends. He relates also his wretched plight in prison before his release by Louis XI and confesses unreservedly spiritual anguish and loneliness as well as physical disabilities. Several of Villon's most beautiful ballades ornament *Le Testament*, among them the *Ballade des Dames du Temps Jadis*, and the *Ballade pour sa Mère*. He wrote his *Ballade des Pendus* directly after his own very real escape from the gallows.

The versifiers of the century of Charles d'Orléans and Villon continued to use the forms that had been bequeathed to them by the medieval *puys* and poets. But a new school appeared which earned the name of *grands rhétoriqueurs*, "*rhétorique*" signifying poetry. If we understand by decadence the phenomenon of over-ornamentation, then these poets, among whom might be named Jehan Meschinot, Octavien de Saint-Gelais and Jean Marot, were decadents. The tricks of metre and decoration which they practised are described in some detail below. The impulse to the movement is to be discovered in the work of Deschamps and Christine.

Jean Marot's son, Clément Marot (1495?-1544) was brought up in the tradition of his father's school. But his expeditions into Italy, his sojourn at the court of Ferrara, his contact with the intellectual current of the Reformation proved liberating forces. He did write some unsavory rondeaus, and a few gracious and beautiful ballades, tainted neither in style nor subject matter. But they were, of course, incidental to his more substantial and characteristic literary preoccupations. His quarrel with François Sagon is mentioned here because

of its significance, noted below, in ballade literature. All the notable literary men of the day took a hand in the fight and Sagon seems to have gone down, under the cumulative abuse of Marot and his supporters.

Treatises on poetry, called at the time *l'arts de seconde rhétorique*, were numerously produced in the fifteenth century. They codified the practices of the *grands rhétoriqueurs* and added new intricacies of rhyme and metre to the old complications prescribed for the ballade and rondeau. With the coming of humanism at the outset of the sixteenth century, the reference to the forms became infrequent and, if the authors of the various arts of poetry refer to them at all, it is with a contemptuous gesture of dismissal. The French poets of the Renaissance, like their contemporaries in other countries, renewed themselves by their study of the languages and literatures of classical antiquity, but they were not inclined for all that to dispense with literature in the vernacular. One of the leading spirits, Joachim du Bellay, composed the *Déffence et Illustration de la Langue Française* (1549). Du Bellay belonged to the group of poets, seven in number, who are known as the Pléiade . Jean Passerat, inventor of the villanelle, is one of the twenty-odd writers also identified with the group.

The period of salons begins about 1618 under the auspices of Mme. de Rambouillet in her Hôtel de Rambouillet. Circles like hers where witty conversation and the composition of literary trifles were in order, multiplied. In these salons developed the preciosity that Molière was later to satirize under slightly differing guises in *Les Précieuses Ridicules* and *Les Femmes Savantes*. The salons flourished throughout the seventeenth century. One of the latest of the *précieuses* was Mme. Deshoulières (1637-1694) who wrote ballades. Indeed the forms had a temporary revival. Vincent

Voiture (1598-1648), the leading spirit at the Hôtel de Rambouillet, produced both rondeaus and ballades. The English version of this poem of his on the construction of the rondeau, was given earlier in these pages.

Ma foi, c'est fait de moi, car Isabeau
M'a conjuré de lui faire un rondeau.
Cela me met en peine extrême
Quoi! treize vers, huit en eau, cinq en ème!
Je lui ferais aussitôt un bateau.

En voilà cinq pourtant en un monceau.
Faisons-en huit en invoquant Brodeau,
Et puis mettons, par quelque stratagème:
Ma foi, c'est fait.

Si je pouvais encor de mon cerveau
Tirer cinq vers, l'ouvrage serait beau;
Mais cependant je suis dedans l'onzième:
Et si je crois que je fais le douzième,
En voilà treize ajustés au niveau.
Ma foi, c'est fait.

A ballade written upon his death repeats the refrain: "Voiture est mort, adieu la muse antique." After the seventeenth century the forms are purely incidental till the days of Banville.

The chief of the forms, the ballade, went through many phases in the almost three hundred years from Machault to Molière, who compared it to a faded flower. As time went on, not only did it become diversified, but there accumulated gradually a fund of ballade ideas, which was steadily drawn on from the days of Lescurel and Deschamps down to the time of the Pléiade. Ballades were occasionally grouped in sequences, and, more commonly still, became a favorite ornament of the early religious and secular drama. The ballade, likewise, continued to be favored by poets in the *puys*, and also in the more or less informal poetical

concourses like those held at Blois, under the auspices of Charles d'Orléans. On one such occasion at Blois, for instance, as has been mentioned in connection with Villon, the paradox, "Je meurs de soif auprès de la fontaine," was announced as the refrain for ballades to be written in competition. Charles and his eleven poet guests tried their hand on ballades based on this idea. Then eleven of his friends took up the idea and developed it.

In the fifteenth century, when a number of very different ideas were finding expression in ballades, there was also great variety within the form itself. Many things could be done with a type of poetry the only fixed features of which were three stanzas, a refrain, the same rhyme scheme in every stanza, and, under some circumstances, an envoy. By actual count, however, the most frequent stanzas were either that of eight lines, made up of octosyllabics and rhyming a b a b b c b c,* or that of ten lines composed of decasyllabics, rhyming a b a b b c c d c d.

One ballade has been discovered in a late fifteenth-century manuscript in which every single word in the thirty-two lines begins with a "p." At an early date French poets taxed their ingenuity in turning out what may well be called freak ballades. Deschamps and Christine de Pisan were both guilty of trying to see to what strange contortions they might subject this poetic form. A Middle English rendering of one of Christine's ballades illustrates the device of beginning every line with the same word.

> Alone am y and wille to be alone
> Alone withouten plesere or gladnes
> Alone in care to sighe and grone

* "a" represents the first rhyme of the first stanza; "b," the second; thus in Christine's poem *one* = "a"; *nes* = "b"; *ure* = "c."

Alone to wayle the deth of my maystres
Alone which sorow will me neuyr cesse
Alone y curse the lyf y do endure
Alone this fayntith me my gret distres
Alone y lyue an ofcast creature

Alone am y most wofullest bigoon
Alone forlost in paynfule wildirnes
Alone withouten whom to make my mone
Alone my wrecchid case forto redresse
Alone thus wandir y in heuynes
Alone so wo worth myn aventure
Alone to rage this thynkith me swetnes
Alone y lyue an ofcast creature

Alone deth com take me here anoon
Alone that dost me dure so moche distres
Alone y lyue my frendis alle ad foon
Alone to die thus in my lustynes
Alone most welcome deth to thi rudenes
Alone that worst kan pete lo mesure
Alone come on, y bide but thee dowtles
Alone y lyue an ofcast creature

Alone of woo y haue take such excesse
Alone that phisik nys ther me to cure
Alone y lyue that willith it were lesse
Alone y lyue an ofcast creature

Deschamps wrote at least two ballades that he claimed in the title might be read in eight different ways. A mere *tour de force* of a different variety is that ballade of Deschamps' on the Bible. Proper names have certainly at times contributed to the effect of great poetry, but a succession of stanzas composed almost exclusively of the titles of the books of the Bible proves to be both dull and discordant.

Jehan Meschinot's four ballades on love must have been very difficult to put together. The four deal severally with "amour sodale," "amour vertueuse," "amour folle," and "amour viceuse." Each is composed of three

stanzas of ten-syllable lines and an envoy of six lines. After the fourth syllable of every line there is an abrupt break. The first half of every line in all four ballades associates some action or quality with love, as, for example, "Amour loue," "Amour blâme," and in all four ballades the portions of lines preceding the break are identical. The second part of the line, however, changes in every ballade according to the special character of the love that is being described. Thus the first half of the first line of all four ballades reads "Amour commande," "Love enjoins"; in the poem dedicated to the love which is friendship, the line concludes with the words "aux gens estre loyaux," "friends to be loyal to one another"; whereas in the ballade dealing with honest love between man and woman, the first line ends with the simple command, "aux gens estre parfaits," in other words, "both man and wife to be perfect." Acrostic ballades were not uncommon. The envoy of Villon's prayer on behalf of his mother which spells out his name reads thus:

> *V*ous portastes, Vierge, digne princesse,
> *I*esus regnant qui n'a ne fin ne cesse.
> *L*e Tout Puissant prenant, nostre foiblesse,
> *L*aissa les cieulx et nous vint secourir;
> Offrist à mort sa très clère jeunese;
> *N*ostre Seigneur tel est, tel le confesse,
> En ceste foy je vueil vivre et mourir.

The ballade in dialogue was a popular diversion with the French poets of three centuries. It owes some of its features to the *débat* of earlier French poetry, which arose, doubtless, from a very simple principle of social intercourse. Some such early literary tradition should account for the frequent use of dialogue give-and-take by ballade writers. At any rate the practice was common. Sometimes the speakers divide the line. Sometimes each speaker is given a complete line, and they

alternate. In the *Cent Ballades*, a whole ballade is more frequently assigned to a single disputant. Christine, again, in *Le Livre du Duc des Vrais Amans*, an English version of which has recently appeared, has a ballade in which the characters, a lady and her lover, speak in alternating stanzas. An amusing *débat* situation is found in two seventeenth-century ballades by Mme. Deshoulières and M. le Duc de Saint Aignan. The subject under discussion is, as habitually in the salons of the time, love. The lady's refrain is "On n'aime plus comme on aimoit jadis," or "Men love no longer as they loved of yore," and she wishes that she had lived when Amadis was young, but the Duke comes back with "Tante j'aime encore comme on aimoit jadis," or "Men love yet as they loved in days of yore." A certain type of dialogue popular in the Middle Ages has its analogues in ballade literature. The older conversations between body and soul appear in modified form. Deschamps has a ballade consisting of a conversation between the head and the body. Villon has a ballade which is a *Debate between the Heart and the Body*, the first stanza of which in Payne's translation reads:

> What is't I hear?—'Tis I, thy heart, 'tis I
> That hold but by a thread for frailty,
> I have nor force nor substance, all drained dry,
> Since thee thus lonely and forlorn I see,
> Like a poor cur, curled up all shiveringly.
> How comes it thus?—Of thine unwise liesse.—
> What irks it thee? *I* suffer the distress.
> Leave me in peace.—Why?—I will cast about.—
> When will that be?—When I'm past childishness.—
> I say no more.—And I can do without.

Thus the form of the ballade became more and more diversified. Nevertheless, whatever external features were added to its structure, the original three stanzas, identical rhymes, and refrain remained unaltered. The

fund of ideas from which those who used the form drew was fairly limited.

The shaping of the ballade in the *puy* must have meant its early adaptation to religious themes. It is not surprising, therefore, to find French poets during three centuries piously inclined to make this fixed form do service for prayer and praise. There is Villon's prayer made to the Virgin at the request of his mother, given here in Payne's translation:

Lady of Heaven, Regent of the earth,
  Empress of all the infernal marshes fell,
Receive me, Thy poor Christian, 'spite my dearth,
  In the fair midst of Thine elect to dwell:
  Albeit my lack of grace I know full well;
For that Thy grace, my Lady and my Queen,
Aboundeth more than all my misdemean,
  Withouten which no soul of all that sigh
May merit Heaven. 'Tis sooth I say, for e'en
  In this belief I will to live and die.

Say to Thy Son I am His,—that by His birth
  And death my sins be all redeemable,—
As Mary of Egypt's dole He changed to mirth
  And eke Theophilus', to whom befell
  Quittance of Thee, albeit (So men tell)
To the foul fiend he had contracted been.
Assoilzie me, that I may have no teen,
  Maid, that without breach of virginity
Didst bear our Lord that in the Host is seen.
  In this belief I will to live and die.

A poor old wife I am, and little worth:
  Nothing I know, nor letter aye could spell:
Where is the church to worship I fare forth,
  I see Heaven limned, with harps and lutes, and Hell,
  Where damned folk seethe in fire unquenchable.
One doth me fear, the other joy serene:
Grant I may have the joy, O Virgin clean,
  To whom all sinners lift their hands on high,
Made whole in faith through Thee their go-between.
  In this belief I will to live and die.

ENVOI

Thou didst conceive, Princess most bright of sheen,
Jesus the Lord, that hath nor end nor mean,
Almighty, that, departing Heaven's demesne
  To succour us, put on our frailty,
Offering to death His sweet of youth and green:
Such as He is, our Lord He is, I ween!
  In this belief I will to live and die.

Jean Marot wrote a monologue in which the Virgin spoke ballade-wise on the day of her assumption. In a ballade written by his son Clément the familiar parallel is drawn between Christ and the pelican who "pour les siens se tue," who "gives His life that His own may receive life." There are ballades, too, that treat of the ever popular seven sins. Closely allied to the religious ballades in tone and in general character are those in which the various aspects of death are treated.

Probably the most famous ballade ever written is Villon's *Des Dames du Temps Jadis.*

Dictes moy ou, n'en quel pays,
Est Flora, la belle Rommaine,
Archipiada, ne Thaïs,
Qui fut sa cousine germaine;
Echo, parlant quand bruyt on maine
Dessus riviere ou sus estan,
Qui beaulté ot trop plus qu'humaine.
Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?

Ou est la trés sage Helloïs,
Pour qui fut chastrié et puis moyne,
Pierre Esbaillart a Saint Denis?
Pour son amour ot cest essoyne.
Semblablement ou est la royne
Qui commanda que Buridan
Fust gecté en ung sac en Saine?
Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?

La royne blanche comme lis,
Qui chantoit a voix de seraine;

Berte au grant pié, Bietris, Allis;
Haremburgis qui tint le Maine,
Et Jehanne, la bonne Lorraine
Qu'Englois brulerent a Rouan;
Ou sont ilz, ou, Vierge souvraine?
Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?

ENVOI

Prince, n'enquerez de sepmaine
Ou elles sont, ne de cest an,
Que ce reffrain ne vous remaine:
Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?
YI NO + A GOTTLE DE RLM

This refrain illustrates once more how traditional formulas are transformed into new and glorious poetry by a great poet. The *ubi sunt* formula, first used in sermons and didactic poems, was soon transferred to hymns and songs, and thence spread from Latin versions to the vernacular. St. Bernard inquired:

Dic ubi Salomon, olim tam nobilis?
Vel ubi Samson est, dux invincibilis?
Vel pulcher Absalon, vultu mirabilis?
Vel dulcis Jonathas, multum amabilis?

At least three of Deschamps' poems, a chant royal and two ballades, are on the *ubi sunt* theme.

Sainte-Beuve makes the point that Villon's real contribution to great poetry lies not so much in the conventional questioning as in the poignant refrain, "Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?" But it has been shown that even these magic words are only a variant of a communal refrain. In a beautiful Middle English predecessor of the great ballade, the *Luve Ron*, in response to a "maid of Christ" who asks for a love song, Thomas de Hales cites, as so many warnings, the miserable fates of those who gave themselves to love and recommends Christ as the only worthy lover. Though these lines lack plainly the concentrated lyric sweetness

of Villon's poem, the most perfect of all ballades, they show, after all, how conventional was questioning of this sort. An analogue of Villon's ballade is this stanza from the *Luve Ron*:

> Hwer is Paris and Heleyne,
> That weren so bryght and feyre on bleo?
> Amadas, Tristram and Dideyne,
> Yseude and allè theo?
> Ector with his scharpè meyne,
> And Cesar riche of worldès feo?
> Heo beoth iglyden vt of the reyne,
> So the scheft is of the cleo.

Villon wrote two other ballades employing the *ubi sunt* motive, neither of which is a masterpiece.

Ballades, adaptable to the sober purposes of religion and death, lent themselves easily to gnomic uses. Moreover, the proverb as a line unit frequently offered a quick solution to what might otherwise have been a difficult rhyme problem. Proverbs were used singly or they were grouped to form a stanza. But the stringing together of any considerable number of proverbs was likely to produce patter rather than poetry. That proverbs should have been introduced into ballades was to be expected. In the early years of the existence of the ballade, there was, indeed, the medieval affection for sententious wisdom to account for the frequent appearance of the proverb, and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there was the obsession in favor of rhetorical ornament to explain the presence of the proverb in so many places. Proverbs are common in the ballades of Deschamps and also in those by his contemporaries, Christine de Pisan and Froissart. The ballade consisting of nothing but proverbs became popular after Villon, his *Ballades des Proverbes*, here given in the Payne version, tempting other poets:

Goats scratch until they spoil their bed:
  Pitcher to well too oft we send:
The iron's heated till it's red
  And hammered till in twain it rend:
  The tree grows as the twig we bend:
Men journey till they disappear
  Even from the memory of a friend:
We shout out "Noël" till it's here.

Some mock until their hearts do bleed:
  Some are so frank that they offend:
Some waste until they come to need:
  A promised gift is ill to spend:
  Some love God till from church they trend:
Wind shifts until to North it veer:
  Till forced to borrow do we lend:
We shout out "Noël" till it's here.

Dogs fawn on us till them we feed:
  Song's sung until by heart it's kenned:
Fruit's kept until it rot to seed:
  The leagured place falls in the end:
  Folk linger till the occasion wend:
Haste oft throws all things out of gear:
  One clips until the grasp's o'erstrained:
We shout out "Noël" till it's here.

ENVOI

Prince, fools live so long that they mend:
  They go so far that they draw near:
They're cozened till they apprehend:
  We shout out "Noël" till it's here.

The poetic tendency to moralize, which led a writer of ballades often to lean on proverbs, also caused him to turn to fable literature and to the fabrication of elaborate animal allegory. Deschamps wrote a number of such fable-ballades. He chose subjects like *Le Paysan et le Serpent*, *Le Chat et les Souris* and *Le Reynard et le Corbeau*. The ballade of *Le Lion et les Fourmis* is political allegory in fable guise. The ants in this case

are the thrifty Flemings. Mellin de Saint-Gelays, son of Octavien, used the fable-ballade in behalf of Clément Marot and against François Sagon, who had attacked Marot, by describing a kite in mid air who swoops down and fastens his talons on a sleeping cat. The inoffensive cat is Marot; the bird of prey is Sagon.

One of the favorite diversions of aristocratic society in the fifteenth century was the cultivation of courtly love, the code of which had been developing since the early Middle Ages. The conventions of a lover's conduct were rigidly prescribed, and all well-regulated ardor was supposed to find some relief in decorous poetic devotion. The Courts of Love, which were frequently held on St. Valentine's day, or on the first of May, furnished the occasion for love ballades with their set phrases and shallow compliments. The ballades of Machault, Deschamps, Froissart, and Charles d'Orléans, are for the most part expressions of these familiar formulas of courtly love. So are the ballade sequences presently to be discussed; so, for that matter, are nearly all the ballades composed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The whole subject of the motives and modes of courtly love is involved in ballade literature. The allegory of these ballades concerned with courtly love became current with the *Roman de la Rose*, where abstractions like *Dangier*, *Esperance*, *Nonchaloir*, were popularized, and where the example of great lovers, too, first became a familiar literary resource.

An Englishman who wrote French poetry, John Gower, shows in all his ballades familiarity with the subject. Like Charles d'Orléans, who celebrated St. Valentine's day in his ballades and rondeaus, Gower includes in his *Cinkante Balades*, presented to Henry IV of England on his coronation, two dedicated to the rites of the fourteenth of February. Letters in ballade form repeat conventional love terms. Gower's *Cinkante*

Balades contain three love letters in the usual epistolary style of the code. In one case he concludes

> My noble lady, this note's sure to find you,
> If God so wills, I'll follow it post haste,
> These lines perhaps will hopefully remind you
> Sorrow to shun and present joys to taste.

Some of the earliest ballades were, as has been noted, imbedded in romances of considerable length. In the fourteenth century and in the fifteenth, too, ballades continued to be interspersed in narrative poems. Thus, in Froissart's *Le Livre du Trésor Amoureux* there are one hundred and twenty-eight ballades, arranged in three groups, two of forty-four and one of forty, all of which exhibit a unity of thought and feeling in that their theme is "Dames, d'amours et de moralité," or, in other words, chivalry. The chief interest, however, for the medieval reader lay primarily, we may suppose, in the narrative into which the ballades were introduced, and not in the ballades themselves. Other poems, too, containing series of ballades, might be cited, such as Machault's *Le Livre du Voir-Dit*, Christine de Pisan's *Le Livre du Duc des Vrais Amans*, and *Le Prisonnier Desconforté*.

At least three sequences of one hundred ballades and one group of fifty, unconnected with other verse or prose, were composed at the height of the enthusiasm for the form. There were the *Cinkante Balades*, by John Gower in French verse, two centuries by "Christine desolée," and a third century by Jean le Seneschal. In all these the familiar situations and sentiments of courtly love figured repeatedly.

In a series by Christine de Pisan, the *Cent Ballades*, the thought connection throughout is much less close than it would be in a characteristic sonnet sequence of the Elizabethans. Her *Cent Ballades*, unlike the sonnet sequences, are on a variety of subjects and seem to have

been composed at long intervals. For example, the first twenty ballades express Christine's personal loss in the death of her husband, while others treat the general subject of love—knowledge of which has been gained vicariously, Christine would have us believe. Gower's *Cinkante Balades* belong approximately to the same period as Christine's *Cent Ballades*. Like hers, they are for the most part impersonal. Various favorite ballade themes are treated. Love is his chief business, however, and love according to the mode of the age.

In contrast, *Les Cent Ballades* of Jean le Seneschal have considerable plot. In his own person, he begins the story: One day, when, as a young man, he is on the road between Angers and les Ponts-de-Cé, he meets a knight. This older cavalier, seeing that the young man is distracted and sad, immediately comes to the conclusion that he is in love, and as a man of experience, he lays down certain rules of conduct in matters of love and of chivalry; he expounds the doctrines of love and of war and shows how real happiness in love lies in loyalty. This advice, given in the first fifty ballades, the pupil promises to follow. Almost six months later, he is put to the test. On the banks of the Loire, in the midst of a brilliant company, one of the ladies takes him aside and taxes him with his ideal of faith in love. She praises the charms of fickleness, and prophesies that his absurd obstinacy will in the end lead to his utter boredom. Finally, dismayed by his attitude, she suggests recourse to judges. He intimates ironically that the case is merely between treachery in love and true faith. But the lady insists that he states the question unfairly and that true happiness in love lies not in exalting constancy too highly or in condemning fickleness too vociferously. She will admit no disloyalty to any one lover in a multiplicity of lovers. The three judges by whom the debate is to be settled hold with the young

man that loyalty in love brings the only true happiness, whereupon all four resolve to make a book out of this joint adventure. Thus Jean's hundred ballades tell the story.

An interesting supplement to the work of Jean le Seneschal is the little series of thirteen ballades, the answers of as many amateurs, who undertook one side or the other of the controversy. Two of the poets support the claims of fickleness; seven champion constancy, and four take an amused, slightly skeptical tone with no reference to the real issue.

Satire, in the centuries in which the ballade flourished, was largely directed against the frailties of the Church and of the court, and against the frivolities and follies of the ladies. In ballade literature, the clergy rarely, the aristocracy more often, and the feminine sex most often, are the object of attack. The jargon of the lowest grades of Paris society was used by Villon and by many other poets in their gross attacks on gross abuses. The satirical "sotte" ballade, nearly always expressed in terms of unspeakable indecency, assailed institutions and individuals indiscriminately. Most of these are unprintable, and, because of their dialect, incomprehensible to all but special students of jargon or thieves' patter.

Many of the satires against women are written in the language of the gutter, but some are entrusted to the ordinary vernacular. Deschamps has a *balade* "contre les femmes" with the refrain, "Il n'est chose que femme ne conçomme." Villon spares no vicious detail in the *Ballade de la Belle Heaulmière aux Filles de Joie.* And in his *Ballade de Bonne Doctrine a Ceux de Mauvaise Vie,* his refrain is: "Tout aux tauernes & aux filles," "taverns and wenches every whit." The king and the court were naturally in a position to be treated more tenderly by the satirist, though in the twenty-five ballades by Meschinot and Chastellain, appended to *Les Lunettes*

de Princes of Meschinot, Louis XI is the object of the satire.

French history also finds expression in ballades. Both important and unimportant events, royal marriages, treaties, campaigns, and military heroes, furnished at various times the subject matter of this fixed verse form. Great historical poetry was not produced. In the wealth of ballades furnished by Deschamps we find one on the birth of Charles VI and of Louis d'Orléans, his brother; another, on the death of Bertrand du Guesclin (1380), carries the refrain, "Plourez, plourez, flour de chevalerie," "Weep, weep, O flower of chivalry"; still another, on the peace concluded with England in 1394, uses for refrain, "There will never be peace till Calais is given up." Deschamps' ballade "sur le marriage de Richard, roi d'Angleterre, et d'Isabeau de France" overlooks the sad disparity between the child of eight and the royal widower. A well-known historical ballade has for its subject the state of France after the battle of Agincourt (1415). Naturally the rivalry between Louis XI and Charles the Bold found ballade expression, too. In the *Chroniques de Louis XII* by Jean d'Auton are several ballades dealing with the failure of the King's campaign in Naples (1502-1504). In 1520, the gorgeous meeting of Francis I and Henry VIII on the Field of the Cloth of Gold was celebrated in a ballade by Clément Marot. Later Cardinal Mazarin was, as might be expected, the object at times of congratulation, at times of execration in ballade literature.

IV

BALLADES IN THE DRAMA

Sibilet, the sixteenth-century critic, wrote in 1548 that ballades and rondeaus were to be found in farce,

morality, and mystery "as thick as pieces of meat in a fricasee!" His statement is richly illustrated by the ballades in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century mysteries that have come down to us. Ballades, like the triolets and the rondels more frequently employed in the mysteries, were used as adornments of the text. They were, as the subject matter of the mysteries would suggest, for the most part prayers to the deity and supplications to Mary for her intercession. A ballade prayer in the *Mystère de Sainte Barbe* (fifteenth century) is spoken by Origines and three companions. A ballade without envoy in which the stanzas are similarly distributed among several characters, the Magi, in this case, is to be found, too, in *Le Mystère de la Passion d'Arnoul Greban.*

Occasionally the ballade figured as a prologue to the mystery. The prologue, whatever its form might be, was spoken by the author, by a member of the company, or by some priest not a member of the company. The purpose of such a prologue was to fix the attention of the audience, to give them some notion of the plot, or to express the author's humility. The prologue in the fifteenth-century *Le Martire de Saint Adrien* is spoken by a priest. Another ballade prologue is spoken by an actor at the opening of the mystery of *Notre Dame de Puy* by Claude Doleson. A noteworthy ballade prologue, a fifteenth-century piece of "diablerie," introduces André de la Vigne's *St. Martin* and is spoken by Lucifer.

These lyric passages in the mysteries were, in general, sung, or, at any rate, were declaimed to the accompaniment of music. In view of the intimate connection of the ballade formula with the *puy*, another circumstance in the presentation of the mysteries is here worth noting: namely, the accepted fact that, in the fourteenth century, the *Miracles de Nostre Dame* were acted at

some *puy*, the location of which has not been determined.

Ballades continued to be written from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth. By far the greater number of them are insignificant as literature. They exhibit the sort of ingenuity that is inconsistent with real poetry. The tricks of the ballade writers, their acrostics, their word plays, made the form a kind of intellectual game. The satirical ones are remarkable for bold personalities. François Villon alone in these three centuries produced ballades, one is tempted to say a ballade, of great beauty.

These poems have for us, therefore, a social rather than a literary interest. In them for three hundred years the dominant ideas of medieval society were perpetuated. The current conceptions of love, death, and religion, the hand-to-mouth wisdom of proverbs, satire mordant and mild, the chronicle of marching events, aristocratic politics,—all these subjects were accepted as within the proper scope of the ballade. Of particular interest, too, is its presence in the religious drama. So many of the mysteries are connected with *puys* that it is not surprising to find the ballade, itself in part a product of the *puy*, figuring in a number of the sacred plays. The ballade was thus considered equally appropriate for the expression of sacred or profane emotions.

V

THE BALLADE IN THE TREATISES ON POETRY

The fluctuating esteem in which the ballade and the rondeau were held is reflected in the rhetorico-poetical treatises of which the poets and critics of France were so prolific in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These treatises not only recorded the progress of the forms and the practice of the poets who had used them, but in

some cases suggested elaborate innovations or novel complications of a type already sufficiently fixed and intricate. The handbooks of poetics that multiplied in these years are very generally looked upon as a symptom of decadence. But, in the case of the ballade, it must be understood that the refinements and the intricacies suggested by pedants were not necessarily accepted generally by the poets. Rhymsters early distorted the form in accordance with the prescriptions of theorists; but Villon, a man of some education, writing after at least four of the treatises had appeared, transcended their theory and produced the most beautiful ballades in literature.

Deschamps' *L'Art de Dictier* (1392) contains the earliest theoretical discussion of the ballade. Its neglect in France followed the invasion of ideas from Renaissance Italy and the rise of the Pléiade. Boileau's passing reference to it in his *Art Poétique* (1675), shows how lightly the form had come to be held at the end of the sixteenth century. The casual mention of the ballade by this critic indicates the verdict of the French classical age in regard to this form. Between 1392 and 1673 there were thirty of such treatises in circulation, the first being Deschamps' *L'Art de Dictier* and the latest Boileau's *L'Art Poétique*. In *Le Déffence et Illustration de la Langue Française* (1549), which marked Du Bellay as a Renaissance man, vowed to the building up of a native style formed by classically educated taste, he inveighs against ballades, rondeaus, chants royal and other such "condiments," as he calls them, as an evidence of the ignorance of his predecessors.

Before Boileau, the classical despot, disposes of the ballade as a form that owes its popularity chiefly to tricks of rhyme, Molière in *Les Femmes Savantes*, played (1672) the year before Boileau's set of rules appeared, embodies in Trissotin's fatal phrase the timely verdict of the seventeenth-century man of letters in

regard to the ballade. Vadius and Trissotin are bandying compliments:

Trissotin

Nothing could be more charming than your little rondeaus.

Vadius

Nay, but your madrigals are the soul of wit.

Trissotin

Ballades after all, though, seem to be your specialty.

Vadius

Nobody surpasses you when it comes to filling up lines.

They continue to outdo each other; then:

Vadius

The first thing you know, people will be erecting statues to you. Now there's this ballade of mine, I'd like to read it to you . . .

Trissotin

Just a minute, have you seen a certain little sonnet of mine on the Princess Uranie who fell ill of a fever?

Vadius admits having heard the sonnet, but declares it to be trash of the worst kind. At this they fall to quarreling. Vadius tries to propitiate Trissotin in order that the ballade may be read aloud:

Vadius

Oh, it was my fault, I was distracted, or perhaps it was badly read. But to change the subject, here is *my* ballade!

Trissotin

To my taste the ballade is nothing but a faded rose; it's completely out of date; it fairly reeks of the past.

Vadius

Nevertheless the ballade still appeals to many people.

. . . . . .

Trissotin

If you mean pedants, yes.

Trissotin is speaking for his age when he says: "La ballade à mon goût est une chose fade."

VI

THE MIDDLE ENGLISH BALLADE

In all probability, it will never be explained to our entire satisfaction why the ballade, which had met with so much favor in France and which won its way with the greatest Middle English poet, did not achieve greater popularity with Chaucer's contemporaries and successors. In England, the fifteenth-century man of letters seems to have been susceptible to a variety of French conventions, but only occasionally did he feel impelled to use the form that in France had become a favorite means of literary expression. France, indeed, had seen the production of ballades by the thousands, whereas the output in England does not exceed two hundred. A complete list of the Middle English ballades might contain only some two hundred and twenty items, but even these items would certainly include questionable specimens of the type. To Chaucer himself are attributed with considerable certainty sixteen genuine ballades. Lydgate introduced the form into the *Temple of Glas*, the *Legend of Seynt Margarete*, and the *Fall of Princes*. He also wrote ballades independent of his longer poems. Hoccleve seems never to have composed a true ballade, although the character of his seven-line and eight-line stanza shows how familiar he must have been with the form. Two Middle English collections of ballades are known, namely, the series that, for many years, went under the name of Charles d'Orléans, and the translation by one Quixley of John Gower's *Traitié pour Essempler les Amants Marietz*. A small number of ballades in print have, at various times, been attributed to Chaucer, or to one or another of his followers. Other ballades, anonymous, still unprinted, are probably to be unearthed in English and in Scottish libraries.

In Middle English the rigor of the French form is relaxed. The ballade is found occasionally, it is true, cast in the mould most commonly used in France. For example, Lydgate's *Flour of Courtesye*, with its three similar stanzas and envoy of fewer lines than the stanzas, its uniform rhyme scheme and refrain, is in form like hundreds of French ballades. But many of the Middle English poems are three-stanza ballades, with identical rhymes and refrains, but without envoys, thus resembling the French form before the *puy* had modified it. Thus the ballade in Middle English, as in fourteenth-century French, may or may not have an envoy. The envoy may be of fewer lines than the stanza or of the same number. In the French ballade it is clear that there is a considerable variety in line structure, but in Middle English, on the contrary, the almost invariable line is composed of ten syllables.

The scribes of the Lydgate manuscripts used the term *balade* most frequently to mark the stanzaic lyric of indefinite length, although, as we have seen, this poet produced ballades in the stricter sense of the word as well. Particularly in the *Fall of Princes* are there ballades of seven-line and eight-line stanzas, with and without envoys.

In the Prologue to the *Fall of Princes*, Lydgate wrote:

> This sayd Poete my master in his dayes
> Made and compiled ful many a frensh dittie
> Complants, ballades, roundels, vyrelayes
> Full delectable to heare and to se:
> For whiche men should of ryght and equitie,
> Syth he in englysh in making was the best,
> Pray vnto God to geue his soule good rest.

And with lyrics, wrought in the French fashion, in honor of Love, Alcestis credits Chaucer in both versions of the prologues to the *Legend of Good Women*.

And many an ympne for your halydayes,
That highten Balades, Roundels, Virelayes.

The "Virelayes" have vanished, the "Roundels" survive in four specimens only, but sixteen "Balades" are still extant.

Of this number, two are compound ballades, namely, *Fortune* and *The Compleynt of Venus*. *Fortune* comprises really three ballades. The most striking features of the poem are its insistence on the adequacy of the individual to cope with things; the challenge contained in the line, "for fynally, Fortune, I thee defye"; and the boast that, "he that hath himself hath suffsaunce." One's first instinct is to search old records and accounts to discover whether Chaucer did "unlock his heart" here with a ballade-key. That he did is unlikely, in view of the conventional treatment of Lady Fortune in the *Divine Comedy*, in the *Consolation of Philosophy of Boethius*, and in the *Roman de la Rose*. It was one of the conventions of the Middle Ages to dwell on the revolutions of Fortune's Wheel. Plainly, in this triple ballade, Chaucer was making use of a popular French verse form; he was using it, moreover, to incorporate ideas derived from the *Roman de la Rose*, and from the *Consolation of Philosophy*. The form is fixed and the ideas in the main are medieval commonplaces, yet Chaucer's dramatic assertion of his valiancy in the face of disaster is effective. Chaucer's other triple ballade, the *Compleynt of Venus*, differs somewhat in form from *Fortune*. Only the envoy is Chaucer's. The ballades are translations, with trifling alterations, from the French.

To Rosemounde is a single ballade. The refrain runs, "Though ye to me ne do no daliaunce," and refers to the aloofness of Rosemounde. The ballade is familiar verse in the gayest vein with mock heroic touches:

> Nas never pyk walwed in galauntyne
> As I in love am walwed and y-wounde;
> For which ful ofte I of my-self divyne
> That I am trewe Tristam the secounde.

Again, in *Truth*, or the *Balade de Bon Conseyl*, as in the case of *Fortune*, the main source of the poem seems to be Boethius. Indeed, in lines 8 and 9,

> Tempest thee noght al croked to redresse,
> In trust of hir that turneth as a bal,

we have another reference to the medieval conception of Fortune's wheel. The refrain,

> And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede,

was no doubt suggested by, "The truth shall make you free" (*John*, viii, 32). The tone of the *Balade de Bon Conseyl* contrasts strongly with the tone in *Fortune*.

> That thee is sent, receyve in buxumnesse,
> The wrastling for this worlde axeth a fal,

is the expression of failure and discouragement; it is not the cry of one who would say,

> I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
> The best and the last!

The ideas in *Gentilesse*, a *Moral Balade of Chaucier*, as in the case notably of *Fortune*, presented themselves to Chaucer's mind from the *Consolation of Philosophy* and from the *Roman de la Rose*. Chaucer took his theory of *Gentilesse* from contemporary standards, yet his application of the theory is his own.

In *Lak of Stedfastnesse* Chaucer used the French form with an animus different from that found in his other ballades. In *Fortune*, in *Truth*, and in *Gentilesse*,

he uses the ballade seriously, it is true, but in *Lak of Stedfastnesse* he makes it a means of expressing the social confusion and the unrest of his day. The refrain, "That al is lost for lak of stedfastnesse," occurs at the end of all the stanzas, but appears as, "And wed thy folk agein to stedfastnesse," at the end of the envoy. According to one manuscript, "This *balade* made Geffrey Chauciers the Laureall Poete of Albion and sente it to his souerain lorde kynge Richarde the secounde thane being in his Castell of Windesore." It is believed to have been written in the later years of Richard II's reign, when he was outraging the people by his acts and policies. If the poem was dispatched to the king at this epoch in his activities, the sentiments of the envoy were certainly timely. Chaucer, as has often been remarked, only occasionally reflects the social discontents of his day; his outlook on life is plainly not that of a professional reformer, but certainly in this ballade he pauses to analyze the source of evil in his age. If the general idea of the ballade be taken from Boethius, one can only say that the old philosopher's *Consolation* furnished Chaucer merely with a point of departure.

The envoy of *The Compleynt of Chaucer to his Empty Purse* is usually considered the last piece of writing done by Chaucer, for it contains a direct appeal to Henry IV, who was accepted by Parliament September 30, 1399; as a result of the poet's appeal, he was in all probability granted an additional forty marks yearly on October third or thirteenth of the same year. A similar complaint was addressed to the French king, John II, by Guillaume de Machault in 1351-6, in short rhymed lines, but Chaucer may more likely have been imitating a similar ballade appeal made by Eustache Deschamps after the death of Charles V of France, and the accession of Charles VI, who had promised Deschamps a pension but failed to keep his promise.

Against Women Unconstant, or *Newfanglenesse*, as it is also called, uses the refrain, "In stede of blew, thus may ye were al grene." It is an adaptation of Machault's, "Qu'en lieu de bleu, Dame, vous vestez vert." Beside this similarity, the French and the English ballade are alike in stanza form and in the absence of an envoy. But they are dissimilar in tone. Chaucer grimly arraigns a lady in the whole-souled fashion so popular in the Middle Ages, when satire alternated with adulation, whereas Machault's reproaches are without spirit in comparison, and his theme is the theatrical havoc wrought in his constitution by the fickleness of his dame.

In 1894 was printed what is generally accepted as a genuine Chaucerian ballade, *Womanly Noblesse*. The envoy and each of the three stanzas end differently. If this ballade be Chaucer's, he certainly departs widely from his usual custom of following closely the fixed French form. There is no such thing as transcending form if the artistic problem is to restrain the development of the theme by the exigencies of a certain fixed type. Chaucer, if it be Chaucer, certainly gained nothing by the looseness of construction in his poem. To a fifteenth-century reader it must have been annoying to be disappointed of a refrain at the end of every stanza.

In the *Prologue* to the *Legend of Good Women* occurs what is probably the best known of Chaucer's ballades. The ballade appears in both versions of the *Prologue*. In one version, the refrain runs, "Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne"; in the other, "My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne." The most striking feature of the poem is its use of proper names. The French ballade writers, as has been pointed out, conventionally introduced these lists, which were in reality a medieval device, for throwing a glamor of romance about the subject. There is a striking resemblance between the ballade of Chaucer's here reprinted and that

one of Machault's which begins with a reference to Absalon and the refrain of which is, "Je voy assez, puis que je voy ma dame."

Hyd, Absolon, thy gilte tresses clere;
Ester, ley thou thy meknesse all a-doun;
Hyd, Jonathas, al thy frendly manere;
Penalopee, and Marcia Catoun,
Mak of your wyfhod no comparisoun;
Hyde ye your beautes, Isoude and Eleyne,
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.

Thy faire body, lat hit nat appere,
Lavyne; and thou, Lucresse of Rome toun,
And Polixene, that boghten love so dere,
And Cleopatre, with al thy passioun,
Hyde ye your trouthe of love and your renoun;
And thou, Tisbe, that hast of love swich peyne;
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne

Herro, Dido, Laudomia, alle y-fere,
And Phyllis, hanging for thy Demophoun,
And Canace, espyed by thy chere,
Ysiphile, betraysed with Jasoun,
Maketh of your trouthe neyther boost ne soun;
Nor Ypermistre or Adriane, ye tweyne;
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.

The ballade in the *Prologue* to the *Legend of Good Women* resembles also in substance, function, and treatment, a ballade in Froissart's *Paradys D'Amours*. These ballades of Chaucer we must still assume to be the earliest English examples of that verse form, although the temptation is strong to suspect the genial members of the English *puy* of having composed ballades antedating Chaucer's. He knew the poetic practice of his famous French contemporaries. This familiarity is evidenced not only by his own use of the form, but more often by his imitation of French ballades in his other poems. He wrote his ballades with conscious artifice,

although he heeded the form of the French models with infinitely less care than Austin Dobson and his followers who reintroduced the ballade into English in the nineteenth century. Chaucer plainly was not sufficiently attracted to the form to do more than trifle with it. Ballades by the thousand were not for him. His bent was quite obviously toward narrative rather than lyric poetry, and his predilection may have helped to cut short the English career of the ballade.

The ballade in the hands of Chaucer's successors never rose above mediocrity. The most telling influence of the French ballade, indeed, from the time of Chaucer, was on the structure of the English stanza. The popularity of the seven-line stanza, rhyming a b a b b c c, and of the eight-line stanza, rhyming a b a b b c b c, in both England and Scotland, and the great Spenserian stanza itself is due to the repeated use of these stanzaic forms by the French ballade writers, to Chaucer's interest in these stanzas, to his metrical experiments, and to the fidelity of his imitators. Lydgate's ballades outnumber Chaucer's, but he is even less bound than Chaucer by the French formulas. Lydgate used the ballade, as Chaucer is not known to have done, as the conclusion or envoy of longer poems. Ballades appear thus in the *Fall of Princes*, and are found fulfilling the same function at the conclusion of the *Flour of Courtesye*, at the end of the *Serpent of Division*, and again after the *Legend of Seynt Margarete* and the *Temple of Glas*. Lydgate's other ballades occur as separate lyrics.

Lydgate's ballades add nothing to his reputation as a poet. In only one of them does he follow the form with comparative fidelity, namely, in the envoy of the *Flour of Courtesye*, and in only one of them, the ballade to the Virgin, have we verse of any beauty. The ballades that serve as envoys are merely dull and repetitious. A study of Lydgate's ballades but emphasizes the con-

clusion that the ballade never ceased to be an exotic in Middle English literature, and that it owes its chief importance to its effect on the English stanza.

The authorship of a number of Middle English ballades remains to be determined. Among these the most important are translations of the poems of Charles d'Orléans and of certain other French poets, printed for the Roxburge Club in 1827 as the *English Poems of Charles d'Orléans.* It has been conjectured on slender evidence that these translations were made by William de la Pole, first Duke of Suffolk (1396-1450), known to have been a friend of "le doulx seigneur," as Villon called Charles d'Orléans.

The life of the ballade in Middle English is probably less than one hundred years, extending as it does from the last twenty years of the fourteenth century, when Chaucer was making first trials, to not later than the seventies of the following century. The courtly makers of the reigns of the Early Tudors were not ballade writers. There are few names connected with its history: of those Chaucer and Lydgate are the chief. Chaucer's ballades stand out as superior to all in poetic quality, though even their merit is uneven. Lydgate's adaptation of the form to the purposes of religion did not produce a ballade worthy to be compared to Villon's prayer. As for the translations from the French of Charles d'Orléans, they retain only in a measure whatever charm is possessed by the originals. That a student of fifteenth-century writers finds much that is curious rather than beautiful, has long been a commonplace of literary criticism. The ballade of that century is no exception; it, too, is for the most part curious rather than beautiful. The discursiveness of the age, the tendency then prevalent to compose prolonged verse narratives, the scarcity of rhyme words in Middle English,—all these circumstances were obstacles to the further de-

velopment of the ballade. Though it is probably true that the stanzaic structure of both English and Scottish poetry was modified by the various types of French ballade stanzas, the form itself languished in England for about three hundred years. After Chaucer, for that matter, the ballade was not conspicuously successful until the days of Austin Dobson, Edmund Gosse, Swinburne and Andrew Lang.

VII

THE CHANT ROYAL

A form closely related to the ballade also developed in the *puy*. The outstanding features of the chant royal are its five eleven-line stanzas rhyming a b a b c c d d e d e, its envoy likewise rhyming d d e d e, and its refrain used six times as the last line. The chant royal was in every respect a ballade except in the number of stanzas and in the fact that the examples that have come down to us do not show so wide a variety in stanza length. The term royal in the name of a poem seems to refer to the fact that it was originally composed for rendering before a prince of the *puy*.

Deschamps is one of the earliest to use the chant royal. He has left us an example of the *ubi sunt* variety. He goes breathlessly through five stanzas inquiring of the whereabouts, among others, of Samson, Hippocrates, Plato, Orpheus, Ptolemy, Dædalus, Alexander, Saladin, Methuselah, Virgil, Julius Cæsar, Scipio Africanus, King Arthur, Godfrey of Bouillon, and spares time even to investigate the present location of Judith, Esther, Penelope and Semiramis, whose place in a stanza is perilously close to St. Peter's and St. Paul's.

Clément Marot stands out as the most finished versifier to employ the form. The chants royal of Marot

are often allegorical in character, the key to the allegory being given in the envoy. Of such a nature is Marot's chant royal on the Immaculate Conception written in 1520. *The Christian Chant Royal*, here quoted, is throughout the length of its five stanzas and envoy a sermon on the moral life. The antithesis is drawn between human greed for possession and human greed for knowledge, and the poet promises that the sinful man will perish like straw in the fires of Hell unless man strive to be sound alike in soul and body.

Qui ayme Dieu, son règne et son empire,
Rien désirer ne doibt qu'à son honneur:
Et toutesfois l'homme tousiours aspire
A son bien propre, à son aise, et bon heur,
Sans adviser si point contemne ou blesse
En ses désirs la divine noblesse.
La plus grand'part appete grand avoir:
La moindre part souhaite grand sçavoir;
L'autre désire être exempte de blasme,
Et l'autre quiert (voulant mieulx se pourvoir)
Santé au corps et Paradis à l'âme.

Ces deux souhaitz contraires on peult dire
Comme la blanche et la noire couleur;
Car Jesuchrist ne promet par son dire
Ca bas aux siens qu'ennuy, peine et douleur.
Et d'autre part (respondez moy) qui est-ce
Qui sans mourir aux Cieulx aura liesse?
Nul pour certain. Or fault-il concevoir
Que mort ne peult si bien nous decevoir
Que de douleur ne sentions quelque dragme
Par ainsi semble impossible d'avoir
Santé au corps et Paradis à l'âme.

Doulce santé mainte amertume attire,
Et peine au corps est à l'âme doulceur.
Les bienheureux qui ont souffert martyre
De ce nous font tesmoignage tout seur.
Et si l'homme est quelque temps sans destresse,
Sa propre cher sera de luy maistresse,

Et destruira son âme (à dire voir)
Si quelque ennuy ne vient ramentevoir
Le povre humain d'invoquer Dieu, qui l'ame,
En luy disant: Homme, penses-tu veoir
Santé au corps et Paradis à l'âme?

O doncques, Homme en qui santé empire,
Croy que ton mal d'un plus grand est vainçueur;
Si tu sentois de tous les maux le pire,
Tu sentirois Enfer dedans ton cueur.
Mais Dieu tout bon sentir (sans plus) te laisse
Tes petis maulx, sachant que ta foiblesse
Ne pouvant pas ton grand mal percevoir
Et que aussi tost que de l'appercevoir
Tu périroys comme paille en la flamme,
Sans nul espoir de jamais recevoir
Santé au corps et Paradis à l'âme.

Certes plutost un bon père desire
Son filz blessé que meurdrier, ou jureur:
Mesmes de verge il le blesse, et descire,
Affin qu'il n'entre en si lourde fureur.
Aussi quand Dieu, père céleste, oppresse
Ses chers enfans, sa grand'bonté expresse
Faict lor sur eulx eau de grâce pleuvoir;
Car telle peine à leur bien veult prévoir
A ce qu'enfer en fin ne les enflamme,
Leur réservant (oultre l'humain devoir)
Santé au corps et Paradis à l'âme.

ENVOI

Prince Royal, quand Dieu par son povoir
Fera les Cieulx et la Terre mouvoir,
Et que les corps sortiront de la lame,
Nous aurons lors ce bien, c'est à sçavoir,
Santé au corps et Paradis à l'âme.

L'Infortuné in *L'Instructif de la Seconde Rhétorique* (1500) explained that the chant royal was above all others the poem especially adapted to royal, noble or majesterial subjects, that it was the best possible vehicle for all serious themes. He described the poets as vying

with one another in the composition of chants royal in the *puy* in order to gain the prize. Sibilet, in 1548, wrote that the chant royal was nothing but a ballade superimposed upon a ballade. He explained the term by saying that it was called royal since, because of its grandeur and majesty, it was particularly suitable to be sung in the presence of royalty, especially since its special function was to praise princes and potentates, mortal and immortal. Deschamps, the earliest theorist on the forms, defines the chant royal substantially as it is written at the present time, as a five-stanza poem of ten, eleven or twelve lines, no especial number being prescribed, with an envoy beginning with an address to the prince and identical rhymes running throughout.

Jehan Molinet, in his *L'Art de Rhétorique*, cites a chant royal that was crowned at the *puy* at Amiens in 1470. The chant royal and the ballade became favorite forms with the poets of the *puy*. The chant royal seems to have been the wholly sophisticated artifice of poetic contrivers who were familiar with the songs of the trouvères and with the early ballades, whereas the ballade originated outside of the *puy* and was adapted to the circumstances under which poetic contests were held.

VIII

THE RONDEAU IN FRANCE

Among the fixed verse forms the rondeau belongs with the ballade in point of age. Though lifted into literature as an artistic dance-song, it, too, has its roots in the primitive past of the French folk. In its earliest form it was made up probably of single lines alternating with the refrain. Later, the line was increased, first to a stanza of two lines and then to a more extended

stanza, and one or more of the lines was adapted to rhyme with the refrain. The word rondel, which is the earlier form of the word rondeau, just as in the French language *chapel* is the earlier form of the word *chapeau*, means simply a song used as the accompaniment to a *ronde* or round dance. The earlier refrains incorporated in rondeaus, like those incorporated in the ballade, were two lines in length. In the very earliest rondels they may represent fragments of folk poetry. The following stanza of Guillaume d'Amiens, who lived in the thirteenth century, approximates the earliest type of stanza built up in the course of choral song:

Hareu! commant m'i maintendrai
Qu'Amors ne m'i laissent durer?

Apansez sui que j'en ferai;
Hareu! commant m'i maintendrai?

A ma dame consoil prendrai
Que bien me le savra doner.
Hareu! commant m'i maintendrai
Qu'Amors ne m'i laissent durer?

The sense of this ancient French poem is that the pains of love are so great that the lover does not know how he is going to bear up under them, but being completely at a loss he will go to his lady for consolation and she will know how to give him peace. An analysis of this poem shows that it falls into three stanzas, a first stanza of two lines, a second stanza of a single line followed by the first line of the first stanza forming a refrain, and a third stanza containing as many lines as there are in the first stanza with all of the first stanza serving at the end as a refrain. The earliest literary rondels are those of the thirteenth-century poets, Guillaume d'Amiens and Adam de la Halle, whose name is associated with the *puy* at Arras, but there are older types

represented in thirteenth-century romances like the *Roman du Chastelain de Coucy* and Adenet's *Cléomadès*. In the fourteenth century, outside of the drama, the rondeau became less a musical composition than a poem.

In Deschamps' *Art de Dictier* there are three kinds of rondeaus differentiated. The first kind, which he calls a simple rondeau, is exactly in structure like the little poem of Guillaume d'Amiens given above. It is a poem of eight lines with a refrain of two lines at the beginning, with the first line of the refrain repeated as the fourth line, and with a two-line refrain serving again as the seventh and eighth lines, the rhyme scheme being A B * a A a b A B. This earliest form of rondel has persisted since the thirteenth century, but it has gone ever since the end of the fifteenth century under the name of triolet, by which it is known to-day. The second type which he describes was used in the fourteenth century only. It was a poem of thirteen lines, the first stanza consisting of a three-line refrain, the second stanza of two lines plus the first two lines of the refrain, and the third stanza consisting of three lines plus the complete refrain, the rhyme scheme running A B A/a b A B/a b a A B A, or A B B/a b A B/ a b b A B B. It is illustrated in this little elegy of Eustache Deschamps on the death of a man young in years but old in knowledge:

Juenes d'aage, vieux de science,
Expers en tout ce c'om puet dire,
Vo mort fait maint cueur plorer d'ire,

Preudons de bonne conscience,
Larges, sans nul homme escondire,
Juenes d'aage, vieux de science,
Expers en tout ce c'om puet dire.

* Capitals designate the rhymes at the end of refrain lines.

Homs plains de toute sapience,
Vaillans pour garder un empire,
Par vo mort mainte chose empire,
Juenes d'aage, vieux de science,
Expers en tout ce c'om puet dire,
Vo mort fait maint cueur plorer d'ire.

The third type which Deschamps discusses is called the double rondeau. It is a poem of sixteen or seventeen lines rhyming A B B A/a b B A/a b b a A B B A, or A B C D/a b c A B/ a b c d A B C D. This poem, also by Deschamps, is probably intended to conform to the sixteen-line double rondeau,

Joyeusement, par un tresdoulx joir,
En joyssant menray vie joyeuse,
Comme celui qui se doit resjoir
Et joye avoir en la vie amoureuse;

Se joyeux sui, chascuns le puet oir
A mon chanter; tresplaisant, gracieuse,
Joyeusement, par un tresdoulx joir,
En joyssant menray vie joyeuse.

Rien ne me faut quant je vous puis veir,
Tresdouce fleur, nouvelle et precieuse;
Si veil courroux et tristece fuir,
Chanter pour vous et de voix doucereuse:
Joyeusement, par un tresdoulx joir,
En joyssant menray vie joyeuse,
Comme celui qui se doit resjoir
Et joye avoir en la vie amoureuse.

the lines being dedicated to the praise of a life spent in joyous preoccupations in the company of the beloved.

The evolution of the rondel from an eight-line poem to a poem of twice that number of lines was accomplished by the process of adding one or more lines either to the refrain or to the body of the poem, more probably to the latter, since the multi-line refrain is older than the single-line refrain. Out of the one hundred

and seven *rondeles amoureuses* composed by Froissart, one hundred and six are of the "simple" variety, but Christine de Pisan, whose artifice as a maker of ballades has been illustrated, took the first step in reducing the refrain. She did not hesitate to prolong the first stanza of the rondeau as this quotation shows:

Pour attraire
Vostre amour,
Et moy traire
De doulour
Me vueil traire
Vers vous, flour,
Sanz retraire
Nuit ne jour.

But she began the practice of repeating half of the refrain at the end of the second stanza. The poem that follows exhibits the abbreviation of the final refrain.

A Dieu, ma dame, je m'en vois;
Cent fois a vous me recommande,
Je revendray dedens un mois.

Plus ne verray a ceste fois
Vo beaulté qui toudis amende;
A Dieu, ma dame, je m'en vois.

Et de voz biens cent mille fois
Vous remercy, Dieu le vous rende,
Ne m'obliés pas toutefois;
A Dieu, ma dame, je m'en vois.

The terms simple rondeau and double rondeau continued to be used in the fifteenth century. A new type of double rondeau came into existence, however, one which had more than four lines in the first stanza. The double rondeau of Deschamps, such as has been described, came to be known in the fourteenth century as the quatrain rondeau, the most famous example of which is the enchanting

Le temps a laissié son manteau
De vent, de froidure et de pluye,
Et s'est vestu de broderie
De souleil luyant, cler et beau.
  Il n'y a beste ne oyseau
Qu'en son jargon ne chante ou crie:
  Le temps a laissié son manteau
De vent, de froidure et de pluye.
  Rivière, fontaine et ruisseau
Portent en livrée jolie
Gouttes d'argent d'orfavrerie;
Chascun s'abille de nouveau.
  Le temps a laissié son manteau
De vent, de froidure et de pluye,
Et s'est vestu de broderie
De souleil luyant, cler et beau.

John Payne's version is close to the original.

The year has cast its wede away
  Of rain, of tempest and of cold,
  And put on broidery of gold
Of sunbeams bright and clear and gay.
There is no bird or beast to-day
  But sings and shouts in field and fold,
The year has cast its wede away
  Of rain, of tempest and of cold.

The silver fret-work of the May
  Is over brook and spring enscrolled,
  A blazon lovely to behold.
Each thing has put on new array:
The year has cast its wede away
  Of rain, of tempest and of cold.

This Middle English version of a French quatrain rondeau is also of interest:

Bewere, my trewe innocent hert,
How ye hold with her aliauns,
That somtym with word of plaisuns
Resceyved you under covert.

Thynke how the stroke of love comamert
Without warying or deffiauns.
Bewere, my trewe innocent hert,
How ye hold with her aliauns.

And ye shall pryvely or appert
See her by me in love's dawns,
With her faire femenyn contenauns
Ye shall never fro her astert.
Bewere, my trewe innocent hert,
How ye hold with her aliauns.

The themes which Charles d'Orléans favored for the rondeau were courtly love, the fair land of France, and the beauty of spring. The process of increasing the number of lines in the rondeau went on until we find among the works of Charles d'Orléans himself rondeaus of eighteen lines. In the fifteenth century, in general, refrains grew shorter and stanzas longer. The tendency was marked to reduce the multi-line refrain to two or perhaps to one line, but the early type did continue in the works of Charles d'Orléans and in the drama.

François Villon, the other commanding figure in French poetry in the fifteenth century, made little use of the rondeau, but the one which occurs in his *Testament* has ravished many poets and has been exquisitely translated into English by Rossetti.

Mort, j'appelle de ta rigueur,
Qui m'as ma maistresse ravie,
Et n'es pas encore assouvie,
Se tu ne me tiens en langueur.
Onc puis n'euz force ne vigueur;
Mais que te nuysoit-elle en vie,
Mort?

Deux estions, et n'avions qu'ung cueur;
S'il est mort, force est que devie,
Voire, ou que je vive sans vie,
Comme les images, par cueur,
Mort!

From the middle of the fifteenth century on, the refrain of the rondel became steadily shorter so that instead of repeating a refrain of two lines or even a refrain of one line after the second stanza and after the last stanza, the first word only was repeated, or sometimes the first phrase. This circumstance is probably due to the fact that the scribes instead of writing out the full refrain followed the line of least resistance and set down only the first word or the first two or three words, allowing the readers who knew the rondeau forms well to supply the rest for themselves. But after a while, of course, the readers forgot the character of the scribes' abbreviation and identified the abbreviated refrain as the refrain. So it came about that with the exception of the simple rondel, or, as it was now called, the triolet, all forms of the rondel were now written with the first word or words of the first line serving as unrhymed refrains after the eighth and after the thirteenth line respectively, for it was the rondeau of thirteen lines with the two unrhymed refrains, called by the French theorists on poetry *rentrements*, that became the standard form of the rondeau for all time.

In connection with the history of the ballade it was noted that the various forms of the rondeau were universally to be found in the religious drama of the Middle Ages. In the thirty-six *Miracles de Nostre Dame* there are sixty-eight examples of the form. They vary in length from eight to twenty-one lines. A simple rondel is spoken jointly by the archangels and God in *Le Mistere du Viel Testament.*

Michel

Vray Dieu, regnant en magesté,
Du tout vous voulons obeyr.

Gabriel

Nous ferons vostre voulenté,
Vray Dieu regnant en magesté.

Dieu
En gloire de felicité
Convient les sainctz cieulx resjouyr.

Raphael
Vray Dieu regnant en magesté,
Du tout vous voulons obeyr.

In the mouth of an angel is put a rondel of the distinctly fourteenth-century variety in the *Miracle de Saint Valentine.*

Dame, par qui grace et merci
Acquiérent li cuer repentant,
Qui vraiement sont lamentant
Des deffaultes qu'il ont fait ci,
Puis qu'a vous en sont dementant,
Dame, par qui grace et merci
Acquiérent li cuer repentant,
Nous savons bien qu'il est ainsi,
Ne nulz n'en doit estre doubtant;
Car vous pouvey troplus que tant,
Dame, par qui grace et merci
Acquiérent li cuer repentant
Qui vraiement sont lamentant.

In the miracles and mysteries the rondels were always sung.

Clément Marot, pre-eminent for his ballades and chants royal, is the author of some of the loveliest rondeaus that French literature has to show. Most often quoted is his

Au bon vieulx temps un train d'amour regnoit
Qui sans grand art et dons se demenoit,
Si qu'un bouquet donné d'amour profonde,
C'estoit donné toute la Terre ronde,
Car seulement au cueur on se prenoit.

Et si par cas à iouyr on venoit,
Sçavez-vous bien comme on s'entretenoit?

Vingt ans, trente ans: cela duroit un monde
Au bon vieulx temps.

Or est perdu ce qu'amour ordonnoit:
Rien que pleurs fainctz, rien que changes on n'oyt
Qui vouldra donc qu'à aymer ie me fonde,
Il faut premier que l'amour on refonde,
Et qu'on la meine ainsi qu'on la menoit
Au bon vieulx temps,

which George Wyndham has translated as

In good old days a mode of loving reigned
With no great art nor offerings sustained,
So that a nosegay given of love sincere,
Was an endowment with the whole earth's sphere,
For save the heart all else was then disdained.

And if by chance the joys of love were gained,
Know you how such good hap was entertained?
It lasted on and on, from year to year
In good old days.

Now all is lost that love of old ordained.
We have but changes and tears falsely feigned.
If then ye will that love I should revere,
You first must furnish love with other gear
And use the manner of it men maintained
In good old days.

Vincent Voiture shares with Marot the distinction of excelling in the rondeau. He was so fluent in the form that he was not afraid to say

Si vous vouliez qu'on vous parlast d'Amour,
Je vous ferois cent Rondeaux chaque jour."

There are twenty-five rondeaus in his works printed at Brussels in 1687. He was past master of the art of playing with the meaning of the refrain and giving it new and daring significances, as this altogether delicious example of his work shows:

Cinq ou six fois cette nuit en dormant,
Je vous ay vue en un accoustrement
Au prix duquel rien ne me sçauroit plaire,
La juppe estoit d'une opale tres-claire,
Et vostre robe estoit un diamant.

Rien n'est si beau dessous le firmament.
L'astre du jour brille moins clairement,
Et vous passiez sa lumiere ordinaire.
Cinq ou six fois.

Que le sommeil nous trompe vainement!
Par l'aventure en ce mesme moment,
Vous-vous trouviez en estat bien contraire,
Mais à propos, comment va cette affaire?
Avez vous bien esté tout doucement,
Cinq ou six fois?

In the days of the Pléiade, the rondeau, having earned the scorn of Du Bellay and his colleagues, was banished. Guillaume Colletet tells us in the final pages of his treatise on the sonnet that when the Palinode of Rouen was reorganized under the authority vested in the princes and members, by a bull of Pope Leo X, in 1597, it was ordered that henceforth the sonnet should take the place of honor previously enjoyed by the rondeau, and that the rondeau was no longer to be considered in order in the Puy de Rouen. This was so much the case, that Voiture, writing to a friend in 1638, said in his letter, "I can't be sure whether you know what a rondeau is. I've done three or four that have fired the wits to try their hand at them. It's a kind of verse that lends itself very well to raillery." About this date the rondeau was reintroduced, Voiture himself carrying on the tradition of light verse handed down by the trouvères. Voiture used the thirteen-line form, which has been considered, as has been before observed, a standard form in France. The rondeau flourished in the salons, in a society much like that described in Molière's *Les Femmes Savantes*.

Corneille, the great dramatist himself, composed two. In 1676, a writer by the name of Benserade actually turned the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid into rondeaus, putting even his table of errata into that form. He cannot be held solely responsible for this enormity, since the idea is said to have originated with the King. A few rondeaus were written in the reign of Louis XIV, but the form fell into disuse again at the end of the eighteenth century, and none were written during the first Empire.

In general, the rondeau was neglected in France in the latter part of the seventeenth century and during the whole of the eighteenth century. Marot had, however, one follower in the art of the rondeau, an Englishman, Anthony Hamilton (1646-1720), who wrote admirable French rondeaus.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century de Musset made excellent use of the form. There is something provocative about the very name of Manon in French literature.

Fut-il jamais douceur de coeur pareille
A voir Manon dans me bras sommeiller?
Son front coquet parfume l'oreiller;
Dans son beau sein j'entends son coeur qui veille.
Un songe passe, et s'en vient l'égayer.

Ainsi s'endort une fleur d'énglantier,
Dans son calice enfermant une abeille.
Moi, je la berce; un plus charmant métier
Fut-il jamais?

Mais le jour vient, et l'Aurore vermeille
Effeuille au vent son bouquet printanier
La peigne en main et la perle à l'oreille,
A son miroir Manon court m'oublier.
Hélas! l'amour sans lendemain ne veille
Fut-il jamais?

IX

THE RONDEAU REDOUBLÉ

The rondeau redoublé, which is only very remotely related to the rondeau proper, was devised by Jean de la Fontaine (1624-1695). It is a poem of twenty-four lines which is divided into six stanzas. Each line of the first stanza appears in turn as the last line of one of the four following stanzas. The first words of the first line are repeated after the conclusion of the sixth stanza as an unrhymed refrain, as may be seen in this original example of the form:

Qu'un vain scrupule à ma flamme s'oppose,
Je ne le puis souffrir aucunement,
Bien que chacun en murmure et nous glose:
Et c'est assez pour perdre votre amant.

Si j'avois bruit de mauvais garnement,
Vous me pourriez bannir à juste cause;
Ne l'ayant point, c'est sans nul fondement
Qu'un vain scrupule à ma flamme s'oppose.

Que vous m'aimiez c'est pour moi lettre close;
Voire on diroit que quelque changement
A m'alleguer ces raisons vous dispose:
Je ne le puis souffrir aucunement.

Bien moins pourrois vous cacher mon tourment,
N'ayant pas mis au contract cette clause;
Toujours ferai l'amour ouvertement,
Bien que chacun en murmure et nous glose.

Ainsi s'aimer est plus doux qu'eau de rose;
Souffrez-le donc, Phyllis; car autrement,
Loin de vos yeux je vais faire une pose;
Et c'est assez pour perdre votre amant.

Pourriez-vous voir ce triste éloignement?
De vos faveurs doublez plutôt la dose.
Amour ne veut tant de raisonnement:
Ce point d'honneur, ma foi, n'est autre chose
Qu'un vain scrupule.

The rondeau redoublé has never enjoyed the slightest popularity in France.

X

THE TRIOLET

The early eight-line form of the rondeau was later given the name of triolet, possibly because, in the first place, it was originally a three-part song. It was only in the fifteenth century, after the creation of the two variant types that the eight-line poem became known as the triolet. In the fifteenth century, besides those authors that have been mentioned in connection with the rondeau, the poets who wrote triolets were Jean Regnier, Octavien de Saint-Gelais, and in the sixteenth century, Michel d'Amboise and François Sagon. More and more, the triolet came to be devoted to satire and burlesque. After going out with the coming of the Pléiade, the triolet was revived again at the time of the wars of the Fronde. At this time there was no connection recognized between the triolet and the rondeau. It was not until 1720 that a French critic bracketed the triolet and the rondeau, but he was ignorant of the real connection between them. The feud between the Fronde and Cardinal Mazarin produced numerous triolets. To a popular tune of the day the literary partisans of both sides composed triolets in which they attacked one another. Mazarin himself, the Prince of Condé, and other lesser political lights gave and took in the wordy battle. The sufferings of the poor during the blockade found expression in this triolet by Marc Antoine de Gérard, Sieur de Saint-Amant (1594-1661), in his *Nobles Triolets*, in which curses are heaped on the high price of bread and on the military operations which caused the scarcity.

Un pain qui côute deux écus!
Ah! ma foi! c'est un mauvais ordre
La peste crêve le Blocus!
Un pain qui côute deux écus!
Récompensons-nous sur Bacchus
Puis qu'a Cerès on n'ose mordre
Un pain qui côute deux écus!
Ah! ma foi! c'est un mauvais ordre.

One triolet, a satire launched by the Parliamentarians against Mazarin, had for its refrain

Maudit, maraud, malicieux,
Sot, superb, simoniaque.

Thus the triolet played fully as important a part in political as in literary history. One of the loveliest of the French triolets was written about 1660 by Ranchin, a councillor of the Chambre de l'Edit. In French it is

Le premier jour du mois de mai
Fut le plus heureux de ma vie:
Le beau dessein que je formai,
Le premier jour du mois de mai!
Je vous vis et je vous aimai.
Si ce dessein vous plut, Sylvie,
Le premier jour de mois de mai
Fut le plus heureux de ma vie.

It is hard to put into English the delicacy of the original, but quite simply it is said in the triolet that the first of May was the very best day of the young man's life, because on that day he had seen and loved Sylvia, whom he had made up his mind to marry. And so, for that reason, the first day of the month of May was indeed the best of his life. The vogue declined in the seventeenth century in France and the form practically died out, though Alexis Piron (1689-1783) was the author of a few triolets.

Patrick Carey, one of the minor poets of the Caroline

period in England, like George MacDonald in the nineteenth century, used the triolet for religious purposes. Carey is supposed to have learned the use of the form in France. The manuscript in which his poems appear is dated 1651. It is of passing interest that he is mentioned in Scott's *Woodstock* and that Scott in 1819 sponsored one of the first editions of his works, in which these three triolets appear:

I

Worldly designs, fears, hopes, farewell!
Farewell all earthly joys and cares!
On nobler thoughts my soul shall dwell,
Worldly designs, fears, hopes, farewell!
At quiet, in my peaceful cell,
I'll think on God, free from your snares;
Worldly designs, fears, hopes, farewell!
Farewell all earthly joys and cares.

II

I'll seek my God's law to fulfil,
Riches and power I'll set at naught;
Let others strive for them that will,
I'll seek my God's law to fulfil:
Lest sinful pleasures my soul kill,
(By folly's vain delights first caught,)
I'll seek my God's law to fulfil,
Riches and power I'll set at naught.

III

Yes (my dear Lord) I've found it so;
No joys but thine are purely sweet,
Other delights come mixt with woe,
Yes (my dear Lord) I've found it so.
Pleasure at courts is but in show,
With true content in cells we meet;
Yes (my dear Lord) I've found it so,
No joys but thine are purely sweet.

XI

THE RONDEAU IN ENGLAND

The rondeau came to England at the same time that the ballade did. In Chaucer's works the form occurs four times. He himself called them *roundels*. In form they resemble one type of the early French rondel. His triple roundel is called *Merciles Beaute*. They are all thirteen-line poems, the first stanza consisting of three lines, the first two of which are later repeated as the second two lines of the second stanza, the whole of the first stanza being repeated as refrain at the end of the third stanza. They are not only thoroughly conventional in the matter, but the images and phraseology follow closely the practices of Chaucer's contemporaries in France. *Merciles Beaute* is here given:

I. Captivity

Your yĕn two wol slee me sodenly,
I may the beautè of hem not sustene,
So woundeth hit through-out my herte kene.

And but your word wol helen hastily
My hertes wounde, whyl that hit is grene,
  Your yĕn two wol slee me sodenly,
  I may the beautè of hem not sustene.

Upon my trouthe I sey yow feithfully,
That you ben of my lyf and deeth the quene;
For with my deeth the trouthe shal be sene.
  Your yĕn two wol slee me sodenly,
  I may the beautè of hem not sustene,
  So woundeth hit through-out my herte kene.

II. Rejection

So hath your beautè fro your herte chaced
Pitee, that me ne availeth not to pleyne;
For Daunger halt your mercy in his cheyne.

Giltles my deeth thus han ye me purchaced;
I sey yow sooth, me nedeth not to feyne;
  So hath your beautè fro your herte chaced
  Pitee, that me ne availeth not to pleyne.

Allas! that nature hath in yow compassed
So great beautè, that no man may atteyne
To mercy, though he sterve for the peyne.
  So hath your beautè fro your herte chaced
  Pitee, that me ne availeth not to pleyne;
  For Daunger halt your mercy in his cheyne.

III. Escape

Sin I fro Love escaped am so fat,
I never thenk to ben in his prison lene;
Sin I am free, I counte him not a bene.

He may answere, and seye this or that;
I do no fors, I speke right as I mene.
  Sin I fro Love escaped am so fat,
  I never thenk to ben in his prison lene.

Love hath my name y-strike out of his sclat,
And he is strike out of my bokes clene
For ever-mo; ther is non other mene.
  Sin I fro Love escaped am so fat,
  I never thenk to ben in his prison lene;
  Sin I am free, I counte him not a bene.

It used to be thought that Chaucer had depended solely on a rondel by Guillaume d'Amiens, the first three lines of which were

Jamais ne serai saous
D'esguarder les vairs ieus dous
Qui m'ont ocis.

But John Livingston Lowes has recently shown a much closer resemblance between these three roundels of Chaucer and three poems by Eustache Deschamps. The following parallel passages seem convincing:

Your yën two wol slee me sodenly;
I may the *beautè* of hem not *sustene,*

So hath your beautè fro your herte chaced
Pitee that me ne availeth not to pleyne;
For Daunger halt your mercy in his cheyne.

Comment pourra mon corps *durer*
Ne les douls regars *endurer*
De *voz biaux yeux?*

Fay que *Pitié* vueille garder
Et bon espoir reconforter
Mon plaint piteux;
Car se Dangier le despiteux
Me nuist, je doy bien demander
Comment pourra, etc.

Chaucer's fourth roundel is found at the end of the *Parlement of Foules.* Just before the birds raise their voices in the little song, occurs the familiar line "The note, I trowe, maked was in Fraunce." The roundel is preceded by the French phrase, "Qui bien aime a tard oublie" (when once one has loved it takes a long time to forget). This phrase is found recurring frequently in the poetry of the fourteenth century. Before Deschamps it was used by Moniot de Paris in a hymn to the Virgin. It occurs also in the works of Machault. In its place at the head of the roundel in the *Parlement of Foules,* it indicates the tune to which the poem is to be sung. The rhyme scheme and structure of the poem are similar to those of the individual roundels in *Merciles Beaute.* In this song which the "foules" chant we find the echo of rustic dances celebrating the return of radiant spring to the countryside after a long, dark winter.

Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe
That hast this wintres weders over-shake,
And driven awey the longe nightes blake!

Seynt Valentyn, that art ful hy on-lofte;—
Thus singen smale foules for thy sake—
Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres weders over-shake.

Wel han they cause for to gladen ofte,
Sith ech of hem recovered hath his make;
Ful blisful may they singen whan they wake:
Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe,
Thou hast this wintres weders over-shake,
And driven away the longe nightes blake.

Thomas Hoccleve and John Lydgate took advantage also of the newly introduced French fixed verse form. Hoccleve's *rowndel* is a clumsier welcome to summer than Chaucer's. The scribe who set down the lines did not trouble to repeat the refrain in full, though the poem is evidently like Chaucer's roundels in structure.

Somer that rypest mannes sustenance
With holsum hete of the sonnes warmnesse,
Al kynde of man thee holden is to blesse

Ay thankid be thy freendly gouernance,
And thy fressh look of mirthe & of gladnesse!
Somer & c

To heuy folk of thee the remembraunce
Is salue & oynement to hir seeknesse.
For why we thus shal synge in Christemesse,
Somer & c

Lydgate celebrated the entry of Henry VI into London after his coronation in France by the composition of a rondel which has come down to us in fragmentary form, but which has been restored by a German scholar to read:

Sovereigne lord, welcome to youre citee!
Welcome oure joye, and oure hertes plesaunce!
Welcome oure gladness, welcome oure suffisaunce!
Welcome! welcome! righte welcome mot ye be!

Singyng to fforn thi rialle majeste,
We say of hert, withowte variaunce,
Sovereigne lord, welcome to youre citee!
Welcome oure joye, and oure hertes plesaunce!

Meire, citezins, and alle the comynalte,
Att youre home comyng now owghte of Fraunce,
Be grace relevyd of ther old grevaunce,
Sing this day, withe grete solempnite,
Sovereigne lord, welcome to youre citee!
Welcome oure joye, and oure hertes plesaunce!

If Lydgate wrote this rondel as a fourteen-line poem with curtailed refrain, as it has been reconstructed, he occupies in the history of the English rondeau a position similar to that of Christine de Pisan in France.

After the fifteenth-century poets, there were no rondeaus written until the sixteenth century, when the form was employed several times by Sir Thomas Wyatt, one of the courtly makers of King Henry VIII's court, who is more famous for having introduced the Italian sonnet into English poetry. He was a student of Chaucer and he knew the lyric forms and commonplaces of Provençal, French, and Italian poetry alike. One of Wyatt's rondeaus is an offensive attack on Anne Boleyn in the vein of the medieval French satires against women. The rondeau of Wyatt's most commonly cited is

What? No, perdy! ye may be sure;
Thinck not to make me to your lure
With wordes and chere so contrarieing,
Suete and soure contrewaing;
To much it were still to endure.
Trouth is tryed where craft is in vre;
But, though ye have had my herte's cure,
Trow ye I dote withoute ending?
What? No, perdy!

Though that with pain I do procure
For to forgett that ons was pure,
Within my hert shall still that thing
Vnstable, vnsure, and wavering,
Be in my mynde withoute recure?
What? No, perdye!

This rondeau exhibits the form which had become the

standard in France, the thirteen-line poem rhyming a a b b a a a b/a a b b a, with an unrhymed refrain consisting of the first half of the first line repeated after the eighth line and after the thirteenth. Wyatt's rondeaus are followed over a century later by Charles Cotton's attack on the ladies.

Thou fool! if madness be so rife,
That, spite of wit, thou'lt have a wife,
I'll tell thee what thou must expect—
After the honeymoon neglect,
All the sad days of thy whole life;

To that a world of woe and strife,
Which is of marriage the effect—
And thou thy woe's own architect,
Thou fool!

Thou'lt nothing find but disrespect,
Ill words i' th' scolding dialect,
For she'll all tabor be, or fife;
Then prythee go and whet thy knife,
And from this fate thyself protect,
Thou fool!

Charles Cotton was a friend of Sir Izaak Walton's. The rondeau in France had been very generally used for personal and political satire in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, and it is the satirical rather than the amorous rondeau that influenced both Wyatt and Cotton. In the eighteenth century the members of the Pitt ministry suffered violent attack in rondeaus that were printed in the political satire called the *Rolliad*, published in 1784. These two specimens shows in what straits the political versifier may find himself.

Of Eden lost, in ancient days,
If we believe what Moses says,
  A paltry pippin was the price,
  One crab was bribe enough to entice
Frail human kind from virtue's ways.

But now when PITT, the all-perfect, sways,
No such vain lures the tempter lays,
  Too poor to be the purchase twice,
                Of Eden lost.

The Dev'l grown wiser, to the gaze
Six thousand pounds a year displays,
  And finds success from the device;
  Finds this fair fruit too well suffice
To pay the peace and honest praise,
                Of Eden lost.

"A mere affair of trade to embrace,
"Wines, brandies, gloves, fans, cambricks, lace;
  "For this on me my Sovereign laid
  "His high commands and I obeyed;
"Nor think, my lord, this conduct base.

"Party were guilt in such a case,
"When thus my country, for a space,
  "Calls my poor skill to Dorset's aid
        "A mere affair of trade!"

Thus Eden with unblushing face,
To North would palliate his disgrace;
  When North, with smiles, this answer made:
  "You might have spared what you have said;
  "I thought the business of your place
        "A mere affair of trade!"

These rondeaus attacking North, Eden, Pitt and Dorset are attributed to Dr. Laurence, a friend of Burke's.

XII

THE VILLANELLE

The word villanelle, or villenesque, was used toward the end of the sixteenth century to describe literary imitations of rustic songs. Such villanelles were alike in exhibiting a refrain which testified to their ultimate popular origin. The villanelle was, in a sense, invented by

Jean Passerat (1534-1602). It is a poem of six stanzas of not more than two rhymes, the first five of which are composed of three lines, the last of four, the first line and the third line of the first stanza alternating as refrains. The tercets rhyme a b a, the quatrain usually a b a a. Passerat's villanelle about the turtle-dove and Wyndham's translation show all of these characteristics.

J'ai perdu ma tourterelle;
Est-ce point celle que j'oy?
Je veux aller après elle.

Tu regrettes ta femelle,
Hélas! aussi fais-je moi,
J'ai perdu ma tourterelle.

Si ton amour est fidelle,
Aussi est ferme ma foy;
Je veux aller après elle.

Ta plainte se renouvelle,
Toujours plaindre je me doy;
J'ai perdu ma tourterelle.

En ne voyant plus la belle,
Plus rien de beau je ne voy;
Je veux aller après elle.

Mort, que tant de fois j'appelle,
Prends ce qui se donne à toy!
J'ai perdu ma tourterelle;
Je veux aller après elle.

I have lost my turtle-dove;
Is not that her call to me?
To be with her were enough.

You mourn for your mate in love,
I chant in the same sad key,
I have lost my turtle-dove.

If your faith is not to move,
Fast is my fidelity;
To be with her were enough.

Grief renews your song thereof,
Endless mine of misery;
I have lost my turtle-dove.

Seeing no more in the grove
Hers, no beauty can I see;
To be with her were enough.

Death, besought all life above,
Take one self-assigned to thee!
I have lost my turtle-dove;
To be with her were enough.

Passerat had written other villanelles, so-called, that did not conform to this model at all. The great Hellenist was undoubtedly unaware of the innovation that he had introduced, but the form caught the attention of his contemporaries and became fixed in his lifetime. Pierre Richelet and other writers on the theory of poetry designated as villanelles only those poems that conformed to Passerat's classic example. L. E. Kastner, the eminent authority on French versification, mentions the fact that "Philoxène Boyer (1827-67) has left one well-known example of this form, *La Marquise Aurore* (which differs slightly from Passerat's model in that the third line of the first tercet is repeated before the first line. . . .)"

XIII

THE SESTINA

The sestina is also in a sense an invention, the first one being the work of Arnaut Daniel (died 1199), who was ranked by Dante highest amongst Provençal poets. Dante himself wrote sestinas in Italian, his most famous one beginning with the words "Al poco giorno ed al gran cerchio d'ombra." In the *De Vulgari Eloquio* he says that he copied the structure of his sestinas from Arnaut Daniel. The sestina in its pure medieval form

is independent of rhyme. It is composed of six stanzas of six lines. The final words of the first stanza appear in inverted order in all the others. If we let the letters of the alphabet represent the six final words of the first stanza, we have the following graphic illustration of the order in which these words reappear in the five following stanzas:

a b c d e f
f a e b d c
c f d a b e
e c b f a d
d e a c f b
b d f e c a

These six stanzas are followed by a tornada, or envoy, of three lines, in which all the final words are repeated in this order: b e, d c, f a. The stanza of the sestina was a climax in the development of the Provençal lyric called the *chanso redonda*, in which the last rhyme of one stanza corresponded with the first rhyme of the following stanza, but with the additional complication that every rhyme started a stanza in turn. The poets of the Pléiade, notably Pontus de Tyard (1521-1605), revived and adapted the sestina. Barnabe Barnes (1569?-1609), who had lived in France both in his boyhood and in his early manhood and had come into contact with the writings of the Pléiade in various ways, wrote five sestinas which are contained in his *Parthenophil and Parthenope*. The first one that is here given presents no singularities of form.

When I waked out of dreaming,
Looking all about the garden,
Sweet PARTHENOPE was walking:
O what fortune brought her hither!
She much fairer than that Nymph,
Which was beat with rose and lilies.

Her cheeks exceed the rose and lilies.
I was fortunate in dreaming
Of so beautiful a Nymph.
To this happy blessèd garden,
Come, you Nymphs! come, Fairies! hither.
Wonder Nature's Wonder walking!

So She seemèd, in her walking,
As she would make rose and lilies
Ever flourish. O, but hither
Hark! (for I beheld it dreaming)
Lilies blushed within the garden,
Stained with beauties of that Nymph.

The Rose for anger at that Nymph
Was pale! and, as She went on walking,
When She gathered in the garden,
Tears came from the Rose and Lilies!
As they sighed, their breath, in dreaming
I could well perceive hither.

When PARTHENOPE came hither,
At the presence of that Nymph,
(That hill was heaven! where I lay dreaming)
But when I had espied her walking,
And in her hand her Rose and Lilies
As sacrifice given by that garden;

(To Love, stood sacred that fair garden!)
I dared the Nymphs to hasten hither.
Make homage to the Rose and Lilies!
Which are sacred to my Nymph.
Wonder, when you see her walking!
(Might I see her, but in dreaming!)
Even the fancy of that Nymph
Would make me, night and day, come hither,
To sleep in this thrice happy garden.

Another one of his sestinas invokes the assistance of Echo, with what results the first stanza of the poem shows.

Echo! What shall I do to my Nymph when I go to behold her?

ECHO, Hold her!

So dare I not! lest She should think that I make her
a prey then!
ECHO, Pray then!
Yea, but at me, She will take scorn, proceeded of
honour!
ECHO, On her!
Me bear will She (with her, to deal so saucily) never!
ECHO, Ever!
Yea, but I greatly fear She will have pure thoughts to
refuse such.
ECHO, Few such!
Then will I venture again more bold, if you warn
me to do so!
ECHO, Do so!

The Comte de Gramont between 1830 and 1848 wrote a number of sestinas and is credited with having devised the form constructed on two rhymes. Tyard had, however, introduced rhyme into his sestinas, the rhyme order in the first stanza running a b c b c a. Gramont reduced the rhymes to two, arranged in the first stanza as a b a a b b. In Gramont's sestinas the tornada is not constructed according to Provençal precedents. There were sporadic experiments with the sestina in nineteenth-century France.

It is a curious fact that the sestina was written in Germany in the seventeenth century by Opitz and Weckherlin. Double sestinas and sestinas in dialogue form have also been attempted in Germany.

XIV

THE REVIVAL OF THE FORMS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The forms neglected in France for one hundred and fifty years or more were revived there in the late fifties of the last century. Shortly afterward, they established themselves both in England and in America. Their re-

appearance in English literature after the lapse of four centuries was due to several causes, the chief of which, no doubt, was the close personal relations existing between the men of letters on both sides of the Channel, the monotony produced by the lesser imitators of Tennysonian blank verse and other characteristic measures of the great Victorians, and the feeling, more or less in the air, that the time had come to enrich English literature with fixed verse forms, some of which might perhaps take their place with the sonnet. The forms found a much more general recognition at their second coming to England than they had in the age of Chaucer. In particular, the group which included Austin Dobson, Andrew Lang, Edmund Gosse, Algernon Charles Swinburne, and W. E. Henley, were so successful in spreading the contagion of their enthusiasm for the forms and in adapting the forms to the requirements of English poetry, that many of their contemporaries on both sides of the Atlantic were moved to follow their example. Thus English letters came again into this charming legacy from medieval France.

The revival of the ballade, the rondeau, the triolet, and the villanelle is a phase of the romanticism which expressed itself so variously in nineteenth-century French literature. The poetic sons of Victor Hugo, far from slavishly following his type of revolt, appear to have prided themselves generally on the "dissidence of their dissent." To Sainte-Beuve goes the honor of having reintroduced the ballade into France. Two stanzas of a *Ballade du Vieux Temps* are included in his collected poems. In the early part of the nineteenth century, as has been noted, Alfred de Musset wrote airy and delicate rondeaus, and shortly thereafter the Comte de Gramont manipulated in various ways the sestina that had been acclimated in northern France at the time of the Pléiade.

It was in particular Théodore de Banville (1820-1891) who, in his conscious desire to introduce unusual and intricate rhyme schemes into French poetry once more, turned back to the native fixed forms. In his *Odes Funambulesques* there are examples of the ballade, the chant royal, the villanelle, the rondeau, and the triolet. He was an ardent student of François Villon. At the conclusion of Banville's *Trente-six Ballades Joyeuses* he makes a plea that, if Villon is to be classed with thieves, he must rank at least, because of the nature of his theft, with Prometheus, who filched divine fire. He refers his technique to Villon in the *Dizain*, prefixed to the same collection:

> Comme Villon qui polit sa Ballade
> Au temps jadis, pour charmer ton souci
> J'ai façonné la mienne, et la voici.

With Villon for a master, Banville's technique became remarkably effective. Dowden said of him some years ago that he "taught modern poets to unite lyrical impulse with the most delicate technical skill." Andrew Lang characterized him as "careful in form rather than abundant in manner." Lang wrote also, "There is scarcely a more delightful little volume in the French language than this collection of verses in the most difficult of forms which poured forth with absolute ease and fluency notes of mirth, banter, joy in the spring, in letters, art, and good fellowship." Stevenson, too, paid homage to Banville. "When De Banville," declared Stevenson, "revives a forgotten form of verse—and he has already had the honor of reviving the ballade—he does it in the spirit of the workman choosing a good tool wherever he can find one, and not at all in that of the dilettante, who seeks to renew bygone forms of thought and make historic forgeries. . . . De Banville's poems are full of

color; they smack racily of modern life." Banville's ballades justify these generous appreciations, whatever charge of poetic trickery may be lodged against his other verse. His early *Ballade des Célébrités du Temps Jadis*, a parody of Villon's masterpiece, is a satire concerned with the literati of the day. Banville says in his notes, "J'ai conservé tel qu'il est le célèbre refrain de Villon: *Mais où sont les neiges d'antan!* et j'ai taché de mettre mon art à amener ce refrain par un jeu de rimes tout different de celui que le maître avait employé." Banville's play *Gringoire* introduces two ballades. Villon is plainly the prototype of the hero, Pierre Gringoire. As the fifteenth-century users of the forms had done, Banville published a treatise on poetics. In his *Petit Traité de Poésie Française*, he gives a whole chapter to "les poëmes traditionnels à forme fixe."

Albert Glatigny (1839-1873), Laurent Tailhade (1857—), and Émile Bergerat (1845—) have followed the precedent set by Banville. Both in France and in England Banville was beyond doubt the one man responsible for the renewed vogue of old refrain poetry. Glatigny, the vagabond poet of the nineteenth century, contributed to *Le Parnasse Contemporain*, a *Ballade des Enfants Sans Souci*, translated in the anthology, which is conceived in the same spirit in which Villon wrote of his life in *Le Testament*. A more urbane follower of Banville, Émile Bergerat, acknowledges his master in his *Ballade à Banville*. Bergerat is one of the most prolific of modern ballade writers. His themes are chiefly those of familiar verse. Possibly the most interesting from the standpoint of literary history is the *Ballade Cambogienne*, printed anonymously by *Comœdia*, which challenged its readers to guess the author. On the following day, Edmond Rostand sent to the same journal his solution, *Ballade sur une Ballade Anonyme*, the second stanza of which proclaims:

Aussi vrai que d'Hermès naquit
Sa lyre, et de Pan la syringe,
Que le Hongrois boit du raki,
Que le Chinois tresse la ginge,
Qu'il était en écus de singe
Le trésor qu'une Humbert géra,
Et que Mergy tua Comminge,
La ballade est de Bergerat.

Another member of this second generation of Romanticists followed Banville in writing ballades. The author of that pathological collection *Les Névroses*, Maurice Rollinat (1846-1903), included the forms among "his wild collection of poems on disease and corruption." The *Ballade du Cadavre*, with its refrain, "La pourriture lente et l'ennui du squelette," is strikingly unpleasant. Rostand's (1868-1918) three ballades, included in *Les Musardises*, are the lightest of poetic trifles. There is an insipid *Ballade au Petit Bébé*, which is evidence that Rostand's treatment of the theme is inferior in delicacy to Swinburne's in the roundels called *Babyhood*.

Edmund Gosse wrote an article, epoch-making in its way, called *A Plea for Certain Exotic Forms of Verse*, which was published in the *Cornhill Magazine* in July, 1877. This article was the manifesto really of the English group to which Banville's work had given an impetus to experiment with the new forms. In this article Gosse told how he had planned to introduce the ballade and the rondeau into French verse, but had found that others had anticipated him in the good work. The interest in the forms in England was confined first to little coteries and later became a wide movement. As early as 1866 Swinburne had produced two rondeaus, not entirely conforming to the rules, which he called rondels. Gosse himself had in 1873 composed seven also slightly irregular rondeaus. Robert Bridges, the present poet laureate, in the same year produced two rondeaus that conformed in every way

to the requirements. The year 1876 marks the return of the ballade after its long absence from English literature. In May Austin Dobson wrote *The Prodigals*, and four months later Swinburne composed his *Ballad of Dreamland*. No one, however, antedated Mr. Gosse's villanelle, *Wouldst Thou Not Be Content to Die*, which was published in the Athenæum in 1874, nor the first example in English of the chant royal for which he was also responsible. In 1911 Edmund Gosse, Andrew Lang, and Austin Dobson wrote me, in response to some inquiries I had made about the revival of the forms, in the following terms: "You should note," Gosse's letter ran, "that 1876 is the date of the reintroduction of the ballade into English literature, Rossetti's translation from Villon being accidental, in the sense that he was attracted to the beauty of the old French poem without having perceived, or having attempted to retain, the character of the form. The reason for the simultaneous adoption of this beautiful form by a number of poets is difficult to trace. But I think it was connected with the circulation in London of certain copies of Banville's *Trente-six Ballades Joyeuses*. This was certainly the case with Swinburne, Lang and myself, and I believe with Dobson and Henley. But a desire for the support of a more rigid and disciplined metre was in the air, and we all independently and simultaneously seized upon the French forms of which Banville gave the precise rules in his *Petit Traité*. I cannot find the book, but I believe that a new edition of the *Petit Traité* was issued in 1876. I know that I wrote at that time a letter of adoring inquiry, and received in return a long letter of sympathy and advice from Théodore de Banville. But do not suppose that any of this interest in the 'forms,' as we used to call them, dates back earlier than 1870 in England. Rossetti never sympathized with it at all." Andrew Lang wrote, "I happened to try to translate

a ballade of Villon in 1870 and later found Austin Dobson and Gosse sporting with these toys. Probably Rossetti and Swinburne first drew my attention to Villon & Co." Austin Dobson said in his note to me, "I was attracted to the French forms because I was seeking to give a novel turn to the lighter kinds of verse which I had then been writing. Some time between 1873 and 1877, I chanced on the *Odes Funambulesques* of Théodore de Banville, whose essays in this kind gave me the hint I wanted. I tried most of the forms in the *Proverbs in Porcelain* of 1877." Andrew Lang's mention of Rossetti recalls the circumstance that there had been earlier translations of ballades made with no reference to the original form. There had, it is true, been translations of ballades of Alain Chartier, of Charles d'Orléans, and of Villon, in Louisa Costello's *Specimens of Early Poetry of France*, published in 1835; but Miss Costello showed no consciousness at all of the rhyme features of the old French form. Four years before (1831), Longfellow had incorporated in his paper on the *Origin and Progress of the French Language* his version of Clément Marot's *Le Frère Lubin*. Longfellow, like Miss Costello, ignored the peculiar rhyme system of the original. Rossetti's rendering of Villon's greatest ballade, also earlier than Dobson's *The Prodigals*, was, as Gosse wrote, "accidental"; Rossetti did not attempt to preserve the character of the form and never sympathized, to quote Gosse again, with the group who were experimenting with it.

The year following Gosse's article in the *Cornhill Magazine* was published the first anthology of the forms. One section of *Latter Day Lyrics*, a collection of familiar verse edited by W. Davenport Adams, was devoted to English examples of French forms of verse. There were twenty-two poems in all, two triolets, one rondel, six rondeaus, two rondeaux redoublés, four villanelles,

two ballades, a ballade à double refrain, two chants royal, a kyrielle, and a virelai. The outstanding feature of the book was *A Note on Some Foreign Forms of Verse* by Austin Dobson. In this essay Dobson said, among other things, "The request [to write about the forms] is in a measure embarrassing because the pieces of this kind in our language are not very numerous, and being few in number can scarcely be held to be representative. They come, not 'in battalions' but rather as 'single spies,'—with something on them of the strangeness born of another air and sun." It was customary at first for the early sponsors of the forms to carry on a kind of campaign on their behalf. Dobson's arguments took the following form: "It has been urged . . . that genuine inspiration and emotion do not express or exhibit themselves in stereotyped shapes and set refrains; and it must be candidly admitted that it is by no means easy to combat such objections. Then again, there are opponents of less weight to whom (it may be), in the words of the 'Great Author' in Fielding's 'Amelia,'—'Rhymes are difficult things,—they are stubborn things, Sir!'—and to such, committed (perchance) to the comfortable but falsely seductive immunities of blank verse, the introduction of outlandish complications is a gratuitous injury. . . . It may be conceded that the majority of the forms now in question are not at present suited for, nor are they intended to rival the more approved national rhythms in the treatment of grave or elevated themes. What is modestly advanced for some of them (by the present writer at least) is that they may add a new charm of buoyancy,—a lyric freshness,—to amatory and familiar verse, already too much condemned to faded measures and out-worn cadences. Further, upon the assumption that merely graceful or tuneful trifles may be sometimes written (and even read), that they are admirable vehicles for the expression of trifles

or *jeux d'esprit.* They have also a humbler and obscurer use. If, to quote the once-hackneyed, but now too-much-forgotten maxim of Pope—'Those move easiest that have learned to dance,'—what better discipline, among others, could possibly be devised for 'those about to versify' than a course of *Rondeaux, Triolets,* and *Ballades?*" Apropos of this last observation of Dobson's, Louis Untermeyer's apprenticeship to "the forms" may be instanced. In a letter to the present writer he says, "You see there was a time—longer ago than I care to think—when I wrote only in the French forms. I practised them one whole year—for exercise, as one studies scales. I have—in the confines of a book which will never be printed—at least five pantoums, two sestinas and even—how I boast! —a chant royal."

It has been supposed that Dobson turned to the French forms of verse because Edmund Clarence Stedman had remarked in *Victorian Poets* apropos of Dobson's earlier poems, that "Such a poet, to hold the hearts he has won, not only must maintain his quality but strive to vary his style." In any case, Banville's *Odes Funambulesques,* with its triolets, rondeaus and ballades did stimulate Dobson to begin his own experiments. His *Proverbs in Porcelain* published in 1877 preceded by two months only Gosse's *Plea.*

In 1912, Edmund Gosse in his volume of *Portraits and Sketches,* writing of Andrew Lang, analyzed his bent in this way, "He dipped into the wonderful lucky-bag of France wherever he saw the glitter of romance . . . his definite ambition was to be the Ronsard of modern England introducing a new poetical dexterity founded on the revival of pure humanism." Lang's attitude toward the forms is contained in his essay on Théodore de Banville. "It may be worth while," he writes, "to quote his [Banville's] testimony as to the merit of these modes of expression. 'This

cluster of forms is one of our most precious treasures, for each of them forms a rhythmic whole, complete and perfect, while at the same time they all possess the fresh and unconscious grace which marks the productions of primitive times.' Now there is some truth in his criticism; for it is a mark of man's early ingenuity, in many arts, to seek complexity (when you would expect simplicity), and yet to lend to that complexity an infantine naturalness. One can see this phenomenon in early decorative art, and in early law and custom, and even in the complicated structure of primitive languages. Now, just as early, and even savage, races are our masters in the decorative use of color and of carving, so the nameless mastersingers of ancient France may be our teachers in decorative poetry, the poetry some call *vers de société*. Whether it is possible to go beyond this, and adapt the old French forms to serious modern poetry, it is not for any one but time to decide. In this matter, as in greater affairs, *securus judicat orbis terrarum!* For my own part I scarcely believe that the revival would serve the nobler ends of English poetry."

Gosse's *Life of Swinburne* and Swinburne's letters and other writings are full of evidences of his interest in the lyric forms from France. When Swinburne reviewed Frederick Locker-Lampson's *Lyra Elegantiarum* he was particular to say, "We look in vain for a ballad or a roundel of Chaucer's . . . and it would have been of some little service to the common cause of good poetry and sound criticism if the duncery which regards or the impertinence which pretends to regard that beautiful form of verse [the ballade] as nothing better than a harmless exotic affectation of the present day or hour had been confronted with the fact that it is one of the numberless affectations or adoptions from foreign models which our language owes to the father of modern English poetry. If the old French ballad form accepted

by Chaucer so long before it attained its highest possible perfection of tragic or comic excellence, of humorous or pathetic expression, under the incomparable and inimitable touch of Villon is to be either patronized or rejected as an exotic of hothouse growth and artificial blossom, so must be the couplet, the stanza, the sonnet, the quatrain and all other forms of rhyming verse in common use among English poets from Chaucer to Wordsworth. But it is useless to insist on such simple and palpable truths; for ignorance will never understand that knowledge is attainable and impotence will never admit that ability may be competent. 'Do you suppose it is as easy to write a song as to write an epic?' said Béranger to Lucien Bonaparte. Nor would it be as easy for a most magnanimous mouse of a Calibanic poeticule to write a ballad, a roundel, or a virelai, after the noble fashion of Chaucer as to gabble at any length like a thing most brutish in the blank and blatant jargon of epic or idyllic stultiloquence." The circumstances under which Swinburne's *A Ballad of Dreamland* shaped itself are interesting. He wrote once to Mr. Gosse in regard to this poem, "The ballad you like so much is about the only lyric I couldn't do straight off the minute I wanted —the verses *jibbed* like horses new to harness, and wouldn't come up to the rhymes all right—so after half-an-hour's pulling at them I went to bed in a rage later by that half hour than usual—dismissed all thought of verses and woke next morning all right, and went and wrote the thing off when I got up exactly as it now stands."

Swinburne began his *Century of Roundels* in the middle of January, 1883. He used the Middle English designation, roundel, to describe a variation of the rondeau which he himself devised. Swinburne's roundel is a poem of nine lines on two rhymes, with the beginning of the first line repeated after the third and

after the ninth line, this refrain rhyming with the second of the two rhymes introduced. By the sixth of February he had finished twenty, four more by the ninth, and three more on the following day. The manuscript was ready by the end of March. The half sheets of note paper on which they are written show almost no signs of correction. Swinburne took great pride also in the sestinas which he elaborated. He wrote to Edmund Gosse in 1877 of his poem *The Complaint of Lisa*, "Certainly if you talk of metrical inventions or innovations there is one of the hardiest on record—a reduplicated inter-rhyming sestina (dodicina, as Rossetti preferred to call it), the twelve rhymes carried on even into the *six*-line *envoy*, as you will find if you look close for them in the fourth and tenth syllables of each line of it —or simply if you (having a poet's ear) read it out." He preferred his sestina *I Saw My Soul at Rest*, printed in *Once A Week*, January 6, 1872, to Rizzio's in *Bothwell*, both of which are reprinted in this volume. Speaking of the latter, he wrote to Edmund Gosse, "and nobody shall tell me I didn't invent a rhyming sestina—a new variety which delighted Rossetti—both in English and French."

To Stéphane Mallarmé he wrote in 1876 in French, informing his correspondent at the beginning of his letter that he was using a piece of paper on the other side of which he had scribbled a translation of Villon's famous ballade epitaph which, Swinburne said, he had tried to put into English verse innumerable times within the sixteen years since his graduation from college and that he had at last succeeded in a version which seemed to him satisfactory. In this same letter he reports that he and Rossetti had had at one time the idea of translating all the works of Villon into English, since to their minds Villon completed the poetic trinity of the Middle

Ages, composed of the representatives of three great nations—Dante of Italy, Chaucer of England, and Villon of France.

Robert Louis Stevenson belonged to the group who were establishing these French forms in English. In 1876 his essay on *Charles of Orleans* appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* and in the next year his brilliant study, *François Villon, Student, Poet and House Breaker*, in the same magazine. In 1875 he had written two rondels, which he forwarded to Mrs. Sitwell from France, writing to her, "I send you here two rondeaux; I don't suppose they will amuse anybody but me; but this measure, short and yet intricate, is just what I desire; and I have had some good times walking along the glaring roads or down the poplar alley of the great canal, fitting my own humor to this old verse."

When Stevenson was at Saranac Lake, in 1887, he wrote to Henley a criticism of Gleeson White's *Ballades and Rondeaus* which had just appeared. "I got your Gleeson White; your best work and either the best or second best in the book is the *Ballade in Hot Weather;* that is really a masterpiece of melody and fancy. Damn your Villanelles—and everybody's. G. Macdonald comes out strong in his two pious rondels; *Fons Bandusiæ* seems as exquisite as ever. . . . Lang cuts a poor figure except in the cricket one; your patter ballade is a great *tour de force*, but spoiled by similar cæsuras. On the whole, 'tis a ridiculous volume, and I had more pleasure out of it than I expected. I forgot to praise Grant Allen's excellent ballade, which is the one that runs with yours." Since this collection of Gleeson White's, which was dedicated to Stevenson himself, no similar anthology has appeared until the present one. It is not too much to say that Gleeson White, who died in 1916, produced a collection of poetry worthy of rank

with the best of our poetic anthologies. His introductory notes on the early use of the forms have a very real charm of their own.

The hold which the forms took on the minds of the younger poets is illustrated by a sentence from Oscar Wilde's review of Pater's *Appreciations*. He begins his review by describing his first meeting with Pater and then goes on to say, "It was during my undergraduate days at Oxford; days of lyrical ardours and of studious sonnet-writing; days when one loved the exquisite intricacy and musical repetitions of the ballade, and the villanelle with its linked long-drawn echoes and its curious completeness; days when one solemnly sought to discover the proper temper in which a triolet should be written; delightful days, in which I am glad to say, there was far more rhyme than reason."

It was Dobson's *Proverbs in Porcelain* that introduced the forms to America in the spring of 1878. Brander Matthews and H. C. Bunner immediately began to spread the gospel. Brander Matthews reviewed the volume for the *Nation*, of May 2, 1878, and published a paper called *Varieties of Verse* in *Appleton's Journal* for June, 1878, on the theory and practice of these metrical experiments. Both Bunner and Matthews contributed to *Scribner's Monthly* and *Puck* the earliest American examples of the rondeau, the ballade and the triolet. Bunner did not always write under his own name in *Puck*. In fact, his rondeaus, *An April Fool*, *St. Valentine* and *That New Year's Call* appeared over his pen name of Victor Hugo Dusenbury, P. P., these letters standing for the title Professional Poet.

That these lyric forms from France have held their own despite the interest of poetry lovers in freer verse patterns, may indicate that they have been taken over permanently by the English-speaking races. Certainly the anthology that follows contains in addition to those

writers of familiar verse whom we should expect to find, the names of many other writers habitually associated in our minds with poetry of an entirely different character. The list includes a reasonably large proportion of the poets of importance in England and America since 1875.

What Dobson, Swinburne, and Gosse intended has happened. The ballade and the rondeau, at least, are completely acclimated. They have their own moods and occasions, their own aptitudes and ideas. Their themes range all the way from vulgar buffoonery and violent burlesque to delicate humours and glancing satire; from idle compliment to glowing passion. The ballade and the rondeau seem to have established themselves as genuine poetic instrumentalities.

The triolet is dedicated particularly to the uses of English familiar verse. Only George Macdonald and Ernest Radford have turned it to more serious account. The sestina remains an exotic. The villanelle appears to be growing in favor. Aldous Huxley, commenting on Dowson's use of the villanelle, writes, "Well handled, the form is capable of very great beauty."

The forms are a perpetual invitation to the apprentice in metrics, and for that reason they tend to direct general attention to the mechanism of verse and hence to enhance the enjoyment of poetry. The Rule of Thumb for the Construction of the Forms in English Verse is included in this volume as a guide to the amateur spirit ranging the lower reaches of Parnassus.

A RULE OF THUMB FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE "FORMS" IN MODERN ENGLISH VERSE

Ballade Group

Form	*Number of Stanzas*	*Number of Lines in Stanza*	*Rhyme Scheme*	*Envoy*	*Number of Lines in Envoy*	*Rhyme Scheme of Envoy*	*Position of Refrain as Line*	*Special Features*	*Total Number of Lines*
Ballade								Address to "Prince or other dignitary" at beginning of envoy optional. Line of 5 accents usual	
Type I	3	8	a, b, a, b, b, c, b, c	Yes	4	b, c, b, c,	8, 16, 24, 28		28
Type II	3	10	a, b, a, b, b, c, c, d, c, d.	Yes	5	c, c, d, c, d	10, 20, 30, 35		35
Double Ballade	6	Like the ballade	Like the ballade	Optional	Like the ballade	Like the ballade	Last line of every stanza and last line of envoy where there is one	Envoy like ballade. Note Henley's 11-line stanza	48, 60 Without envoy; 52, 65 With envoy
Ballade A Double Refrain	3	8	a, b, a, b, b, c, b, c,	Like the ballade	4	b, b, c, c	4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 26, 28	Envoy like ballade. All mid-stanza refrains alike. All refrains at end of stanza alike	28
Chant Royal	5	11	a, b, a, b, c, c, d, d, e, d, e	Yes	5	d. d. e. d, e,	11, 22, 33, 44, 55, 60	Same as ballade	60

SESTINA

Number of Stanzas	Number of Lines in Stanza	Envoy	Number of Lines in Envoy	Rhyme Scheme	Arrangement of Final Words in Stanzas	Arrangement of Final Words in Envoy
6	6	(Called tornada)	3	May be rhymed or unrhymed. If rhymed, the first, third, and fifth stanzas follow this scheme: a, b, a, b, a, b; the second, fourth, and sixth, b, a, b, a, b, a; the envoy, b, a, b	1-2-3-4-5-6 6-1-5-2-4-3 3-6-4-1-2-5 5-3-2-6-1-4 4-5-1-3-6-2 2-4-6-5-3-1 (The first line of numerals represents the six final words of the first stanza)	2 comes in middle of first line. 5 comes at end of first line. 4 comes in middle of second line; 3 at end of second line. 6 comes in middle of third line; 1 at end of third line.

VILLANELLE

Number of Stanzas	Number of Lines in Stanza	Rhyme Scheme	Refrain	Special Features
6	In first five stanzas, three lines; in sixth, four lines	For three-line stanzas a, b, a; for four-line stanza, a, b, a, a	The first (R^1) and third (R^2) lines of the first stanza are the refrain lines. R^1 = refrain of second stanza; R^2 = refrain of third stanza; R^1 = refrain of fourth stanza; R^2 = refrain of fifth stanza; R^1 and R^2 are the third and fourth lines respectively of the sixth stanza	Difference in signification of refrain at its various repetitions desirable. Line of four accents commonly employed

RONDEAU GROUP

Form	*Number of Lines*	*Rhyme Scheme*	*Length of Refrain*	*Position of Refrain as Line*	*Number of Stanzas*	*Special Features*
TRIOLET	8	A, B, a, A, a b, A, B	Two lines	Repeated as lines 1 and 2; 7 and 8; the first line only as line 4	1	Lines of 3 accents and 4 accents common
ROUNDEL	9	a, b, a, R; b, a, b; a, b, a, R	As in rondeau, but refrain always rhymes with "b"	First part of first line; after third line; after ninth line	3	Swinburne favored line of 6 feet and frequent anapæsts
RONDEL Type I	14	A, B, a, b; b, a, A, B; a, b, a, b, A, B	Two lines	As lines 1 and 2; 7 and 8; 13 and 14	3	(1) Any rhyme order may be followed so long as only 2 rhymes are used (2) New meaning to be given to refrain when repeated for last line
Type II	13	A, B, b, a; a, b, A, B; a, b, b, a, A	Two lines	As lines 1 and 2; 7 and 8. First line of refrain only as line 13	3	
RONDEAU Type I	13	a, a, b, b, a; a, a, b, R; a, a, b, b, a, R	First part of first line = "R"	First part of first line; after line 5; after line 13	3	Rhymes as in Rondel
Type II	10	a, b, b, a, a, b, R; a, b, b, a, R	First word of first line	After sixth and after tenth line	2	Play on meaning of refrain as in Rondel
RONDEAU REDOUBLÉ	24	a, b, a, b for stanzas one, three, and five; b, a, b, a, for stanzas two and four; b, a, b, a, R, for sixth stanza	First stanza (4 lines) = R^1, R^2 R^3, R^4	R^1 = refrain of stanza 2 R^2 = " " " 3 R^3 = " " " 4 R^4 = " " " 5 First phrase of line 1 repeated after sixth stanza; unrhymed	6	

THE ANTHOLOGY

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THE PRODIGALS

"Princes!—and you, most valorous,
  Nobles and Barons of all degrees!
Hearken awhile to the prayer of us,—
  Beggars that come from the over-seas!
  Nothing we ask or of gold or fees;
Harry us not with the hounds we pray;
  Lo,—for the surcote's hem we seize,—
Give us—ah! give us—but Yesterday!"

"Dames most delicate, amorous!
  Damosels blithe as the belted bees!
Hearken awhile to the prayer of us,—
  Beggars that come from the over-seas!
  Nothing we ask of the things that please;
Weary are we, and worn, and gray;
  Lo,—for we clutch and we clasp your knees,—
Give us—ah! give us—but Yesterday!"

"Damosels—Dames, be piteous!"
  (But the dames rode fast by the roadway trees.)
"Hear us, O Knights magnanimous!"
  (But the knights pricked on in their panoplies.)
  Nothing they gat or of hope or ease,
But only to beat on the breast and say:—
  "Life we drank to the dregs and lees;
Give us—ah! give us—but Yesterday!"

ENVOY

Youth, take heed to the prayer of these!
Many there be by the dusty way,—
  Many that cry to the rocks and seas
"Give us—ah! give us—but Yesterday!"

Austin Dobson

TO AUSTIN DOBSON *

From the sunny climes of France,
  Flying to the west,
Came a flock of birds by chance,
  There to sing and rest:
Of some secrets deep in quest,—
  Justice for their wrongs,—
Seeking one to shield their breast,
  One to write their songs.

Melodies of old romance,
  Joy and gentle jest,
Notes that made the dull heart dance
  With a merry zest;—
Maids in matchless beauty drest,
  Youths in happy throngs;—
These they set to tempt and test
  One to write their songs.

In old London's wide expanse
  Built each feathered guest,—
Man's small pleasure to enhance,
  Singing him to rest,—
Came, and tenderly confessed,
  Perched on leafy prongs,
Life were sweet if they possessed
  One to write their songs.

ENVOY

Austin, it was you they blest:
  Fame to you belongs!
Time has proven you're the best
  One to write their songs.

Frank Dempster Sherman

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FOR ME THE BLITHE BALLADE

Of all the songs that dwell
  Where softest speech doth flow,
Some love the sweet rondel,
  And some the bright rondeau
  With rhymes that tripping go
In mirthful measures clad;
  But would I choose them?—no,
For me the blithe ballade!

O'er some, the villanelle,
  That sets the heart aglow,
Doth its enchanting spell
  With lines recurring throw;
  Some weighed with wasting woe,
Gay triolets make glad;
  But would I choose them?—no,
For me the blithe ballade!

On chant of stately swell
  With measured feet and slow,
As grave as minster bell
  At vesper tolling low,
  Do some their praise bestow;
Some on sestinas sad;
  But would I choose them?—no,
For me the blithe ballade!

ENVOY

Prince, to these songs a-row
  The Muse might endless add;
But would I choose them?—no,
  For me the blithe ballade!

Clinton Scollard

BALLADE OF THE LOST REFRAIN

In a vacant mood the phrase came to me—
  Alas! I neglected to make it mine—
It may have been jocund, or deep and gloomy:
  It is gone, and has left no trace or sign.
It is gone, and it might have been the line
  That in all men's memories would remain:
It is vanished and never again will shine—
  O lovely lyrical lost refrain!

Though Apollo's golden sandal shoe me,
  Dionysos pour me his purpling wine,
That forgotten snatch will still pursue me
  And chafe my spirit and chill my spine:
For lo! when one of the Muses nine,
  Descending stoops to a clownish brain,
She expects him to note the hint divine—
  O lovely lyrical lost refrain!

And now—no wonder my joints are rheumy
  And I am listless to laugh or dine,
And my lightsome friends say they never knew me
  So dolorobiliously peak and pine;
But I have no mnemonics that can untwine
  That line so musical, terse, urbane,
Chryselephant, nympholept, sapphirine—
  O lovely lyrical lost refrain!

ENVOY

O Muse (as Rosalind said), come woo me!
  My sorrowful heart you may soothe and sain,
But never again will that thrill run through me—
  O lovely lyrical lost refrain!

Christopher Morley

THE BALLADE OF THE INCOMPETENT BALLADE-MONGER

I am not ambitious at all:
  I am not a poet, I know
(Though I do love to see a mere scrawl
  To order and symmetry grow).
  My muse is uncertain and slow,
I am not expert with my tools,
  I lack the poetic *argot:*
But I hope I have kept to the rules.

When your brain is undoubtedly small,
  'Tis hard, sir, to write in a row,
Some five or six rhymes to Nepaul,
  And more than a dozen to Joe:
  The metre is easier though,
Three rhymes are sufficient for 'ghouls,'
  My lines are deficient in go,
But I hope I have kept to the rules.

Unable to fly let me crawl,
  Your patronage kindly bestow:
I am not the author of Saul,
  I am not Voltaire or Rousseau:
  I am not desirous, oh no!
To rise from the ranks of the fools,
  To shine with Gosse, Dobson and Co.:
But I hope I have kept to the rules.

Dear Sir, though my language is low,
  Let me dip in Pierian pools:
My verses are only so so,
  But I hope I have kept to the rules.

J. K. Stephen

A BALLADE OF INDIGNATION

Now if there is one thing I hate
  It is lame vers de société,
And I cannot help feeling irate
  With the versemongers writing to-day.
  They rhyme a thing any old way,
They regard neither science nor schools;
  But when the French Forms they essay,
At least they might follow the rules.

They consider themselves "up-to-date"
  If they've written a Sonnet to May,
And fancy they feel on their pate
  A chaplet of laurel or bay.
  At a triolet or virelai
They rush, like proverbial fools,—
  But in their wild, wordy display
At least they might follow the rules.

In their ignorance boldly elate,
  To rhymes no attention they pay;
They ride at a rollicking gait
  On a Pegasus madly astray.
  No hindrance their progress will stay,
No remonstrance their mad ardour cools,—
  But in their syllabic array
At least they might follow the rules.

L'ENVOI

  Calliope, pardon, I pray,
These workmen without any tools,
  And to them this message convey:
At least they might follow the rules.

Carolyn Wells

BALLAD AGAINST THE ENEMIES OF FRANCE

(François Villon)

May he fall in with beasts that scatter fire,
  Like Jason, when he sought the fleece of gold,
Or change from man to beast three years entire,
  As King Nebuchadnezzar did of old;
Or else have times as shameful and as bad
As Trojan folk for ravished Helen had;
Or gulfed with Proserpine and Tantalus
Let hell's deep fen devour him dolorous,
  With worse to bear than Job's worst sufferance,
Bound in his prison-maze with Dædalus,
  Who could wish evil to the state of France!

May he four months, like bitterns in the mire,
  Howl with head downmost in the lake-springs cold,
Or to bear harness like strong bulls for hire
  To the Great Turk for money down be sold;
Or thirty years like Magdalen live sad,
With neither wool nor web of linen clad;
Drown like Narciss', or swing down pendulous
Like Absalom with locks luxurious,
  Or like Judas fallen to reprobance;
Or find such death as Simon sorcerous,
  Who could wish evil to the state of France!

May the old times come of fierce Octavian's ire,
  And in his belly molten coin be told;
May he like Victor in the mill expire
  Crushed between moving millstones on him rolled,
Or in deep sea drenched breathless, more adrad
Than in the whale's bulk Jonas, when God bade;
From Phœbus' light, from Juno's treasure-house
Driven, and from joys of Venus amorous,
  And cursed of God most high to the utterance,
As was the Syrian king Antiochus,
  Who could wish evil to the state of France!

ENVOY

Prince, may the bright-winged brood of Æolus
To sea-king Glaucus' wild wood cavernous
  Bear him bereft of peace and hope's least glance,
For worthless is he to get good of us,
  Who could wish evil to the state of France!

Algernon Charles Swinburne

BALLADE AGAINST THE ENEMIES OF FRANCE

(François Villon)

O may he meet with dragons belching fire,
Like Jason, he who sought the fleece of gold;
Or to a beast, till seven long years transpire,
Like Nabugodonozor, king of old,
Be changed; or smitten with as vast a woe
As Helen's rape brought Troy-town long ago;
Or swallowed be within those bogs of hell
Where Tantalus and Proserpina dwell;
More than Job's sorrows be his evil chance,
Close-snared as Dædalus of whom men tell,
Who could wish evil to the realm of France!

Four months head-downward in the marsh's mire,
Even as the bittern may he cry; or, sold
To the Grand Turk for cash, in harness dire,
Toil like a bull; or, as the tale is told
Of Magdalen, for thirty long years go
Sans wool or linen—yea! unvestured so;
Drowned like Narcissus be he; or, as befel
To Absalom, hang by the hair; 'twere well
Judas' dread end were his, or circumstance
Of horror strange as Simon Magus' spell,
Who could wish evil to the realm of France!

Were but Octavius king—runs my desire—
With molten coin, so slowly growing cold,
To fill his belly; or might he expire
Between revolving mill-stones crushed and rolled,
Like good Saint Victor; or in the choking flow
Of ocean drown, fate worse than Jonah's know
In the great whale; him from thy light expel,
Phœbus; and, Venus—punishment more fell—
Deny him thy sweet self; and *à outrance*
Curse him, High God, with curse ineffable
Who could wish evil to the realm of France!

ENVOI

Prince, may Eolus forth on winds compel
His soul, where, sunk beneath the ocean's swell,
The woods of Glaucus gloom, and never glance
Of hope can fall—in him what good can dwell
Who could wish evil to the realm of France!

Richard Le Gallienne

EPITAPH IN BALLADE FORM

which Villon made for himself and his friends, waiting to be hanged with them.

Brothers among men who after us shall live,
Let not your hearts' disdain against us rise,
For if some pity for our woe ye have
The sooner God your pardon shall devise.
Behold, here five or six of us we peize;
As to our flesh, which we fed wantonly,
Rotten, devoured, it hangeth mournfully;
And we, the bones, to dust and ash are riven.
Let none make scorn of our infirmity
But pray to God that all we be forgiven.

If, brothers, we cry out, ye should not give
Disdain for answer, even if justice 'tis

That murders us. This thing ye should believe,
That always all men are not wholly wise;
Pray often for us then, not once or twice,
Before the fair Son of the Virgin Mary,
Lest that—for us—His grace prove injury
And we beneath the lord of hell be driven.
Now we are dead, cease importunity
And pray to God that all we be forgiven.

The rain doth weaken all our strength and lave
Us, the sun blackens us again and dries:
Our eyes the ravens hollow like a grave;
Our beards and eyebrows are plucked off by pies.
Never rest comes to us in any wise;
Now here, now there, as the wind sways, sway we,
Swung at the wind's high pleasure ceaselessly,
More pecked by birds than hazel nuts that ripen.
Be ye not then of our fraternity,
But pray to God that all we be forgiven.

ENVOI

Prince Jesus, above all hast mastery,
Let not high hell become our seigneury,
There we have naught to do nor order even.
Brothers, keep here no thought of mockery,
But pray to God that all we be forgiven.

Richard Aldington

THE EPITAPH IN FORM OF A BALLAD

which Villon made for himself and his comrades, expecting to be hanged along with them.

Men, brother men, that after us yet live,
  Let not your hearts too hard against us be;
For if some pity of us poor men ye give,
  The sooner God shall take of you pity.

Here are we five or six strung up, you see,
And here the flesh that all too well we fed
Bit by bit eaten and rotten, rent and shred,
And we the bones grow dust and ash withal;
Let no man laugh at us discomforted,
But pray to God that he forgive us all.

If we call on you, brothers, to forgive,
Ye should not hold our prayer in scorn, though we
Were slain by law; ye know that all alive
Have not wit alway to walk righteously;
Make therefore intercession heartily
With him that of a virgin's womb was bred,
That his grace be not as a dry well-head
For us, nor let hell's thunder on us fall;
We are dead, let no man harry or vex us dead,
But pray to God that he forgive us all.

The rain has washed and laundered us all five,
And the sun dried and blackened; yea, perdie,
Ravens and pies with beaks that rend and rive,
Have dug our eyes out, and plucked off for fee
Our beards and eyebrows; never are we free,
Not once, to rest; but here and there still sped,
Drive at its wild will by the wind's change led,
More pecked of birds than fruits on garden-wall.
Men, for God's love, let no gibe here be said,
But pray to God that he forgive us all.

Prince Jesus, that of all art lord and head,
Keep us, that hell be not our bitter bed;
We have nought to do in such a master's hall.
Be not ye therefore of our fellowhead,
But pray to God that he forgive us all.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

BALLAD OF THE GIBBET

An epitaph in the form of a ballad that François Villon wrote of himself and his company, they expecting shortly to be hanged.

Brothers and men that shall after us be,
  Let not your hearts be hard to us:
For pitying this our misery
  Ye shall find God the more piteous.
  Look on us six that are hanging thus,
And for the flesh that so much we cherished
How it is eaten of birds and perished,
  And ashes and dust fill our bones' place,
Mock not at us that so feeble be,
  But pray God pardon us out of His Grace.

Listen, we pray you, and look not in scorn,
  Though justly, in sooth, we are cast to die;
Ye wot no man so wise is born
  That keeps his wisdom constantly.
  Be ye then merciful, and cry
To Mary's Son that is piteous,
That His mercy take no stain from us,
  Saving us out of the fiery place.
We are but dead, let no soul deny
  To pray God succour us of His grace.

The rain out of heaven has washed us clean,
  The sun has scorched us black and bare,
Ravens and rocks have pecked at our eyne,
  And feathered their nests with our beards and hair,
  Round are we tossed, and here and there,
This way and that, at the wild wind's will,
Never a moment my body is still;
  Birds they are busy about my face.
Live not as we, nor fare as we fare;
  Pray God pardon us out of His grace.

L'ENVOY

Prince Jesus, Master of all, to thee
We pray Hell gain no mastery,
  That we come never anear that place;
And ye men, make no mockery,
  Pray God pardon us out of His grace.

Andrew Lang

BALLADE DES PENDUS (GRINGOIRE)

Where wide the forest boughs are spread,
  When Flora wakes with sylph and fay,
Are crowns and garlands of men dead,
  All golden in the morning gay;
Within this ancient garden grey
  Are clusters such as no man knows,
Where Moor and Soldan bear the sway:
  This is King Louis' orchard close.

These wretched folk wave overhead,
  With such strange thoughts as none may say;
A moment still, then sudden sped,
  They swing in a ring and waste away.
The morning smites them with her ray;
  They toss with every breeze that blows,
They dance where fires of dawning play:
  This is King Louis' orchard close.

All hanged and dead, they've summoned
  (With Hell to aid that hears them pray)
New legions of an army dread,
  Now down the blue sky flames the day;
The dew dries off; the foul array
  Of obscene ravens gathers and goes,
With wings that flap and beaks that flay:
  This is King Louis' orchard close.

ENVOI

Prince, where leaves murmur of the May,
  A tree of bitter clusters grows;
The bodies of men dead are they,
  This is King Louis' orchard close.

Andrew Lang

BALLADE OF DEAD LADIES *

After Villon

Nay, tell me now in what strange air
The Roman Flora dwells to-day.
Where Archippiada hides, and where
Beautiful Thais has passed away?
Whence answers Echo, afield, astray,
By mere or stream,—around, below?
Lovelier she than a woman of clay;
Nay, but where is the last year's snow?

Where is wise Héloïse, that care
Brought on Abeilard, and dismay?
All for her love he found a snare,
A maimed poor monk in orders grey;
And where's the Queen who willed to slay
Buridan, that in a sack must go
Afloat down Seine,—a perilous way—
Nay, but where is the last year's snow?

Where's that White Queen, a lily rare,
With her sweet song, the Siren's lay?
Where's Bertha Broad-foot, Beatrice fair?
Alys and Ermengarde, where are they?

* From *Ballades and Verses Vain* by Andrew Lang. Copyright 1884 by Charles Scribner's Sons, Publishers.

Good Joan, whom English did betray
In Rouen town, and burned her? No,
Maiden and Queen, no man may say;
Nay, but where is the last year's snow?

ENVOY

Prince, all this week thou need'st not pray,
Nor yet this year the thing to know.
One burden answers, ever and aye,
"Nay, but where is the last year's snow?"

Andrew Lang

BALLAD OF THE LORDS OF OLD TIME

What more? Where is the third Calixt,
  Last of that name now dead and gone,
Who held four years the Papalist?
  Alphonso king of Aragon,
  The gracious lord, duke of Bourbon,
And Arthur, duke of old Britaine?
  And Charles the Seventh, that worthy one?
Even with the good knight Charlemain.

The Scot, too, king of mount and mist,
  With half his face vermilion,
Men tell us, like an amethyst
  From brow to chin that blazed and shone;
  The Cypriote king of old renown,
Alas! and that good king of Spain,
  Whose name I cannot think upon?
Even with the good knight Charlemain.

No more to say of them I list;
  'Tis all but vain, all dead and done:
For death may no man born resist,
  Nor make appeal when death comes on.
  I make yet one more question;
Where's Lancelot, king of far Bohain?
  Where's he whose grandson called him son?
Even with the good knight Charlemain.

A BALLAD OF FRANÇOIS VILLON

Prince of all Ballad-Makers

Bird of the bitter bright grey golden morn
  Scarce risen upon the dusk of dolorous years,
First of us all and sweetest singer born
  Whose far shrill note the world of new men hears
  Cleave the cold shuddering shade as twilight clears;
When song new-born put off the old world's attire
And felt its tune on her changed lips expire,
  Writ foremost on the roll of them that came
Fresh girt for service of the latter lyre,
  Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name!

Alas the joy, the sorrow, and the scorn,
  That clothed thy life with hopes and sins and fears, 1
And gave thee stones for bread and tares for corn
  And plume-plucked jail-birds for thy starveling peers
  Till death clipt close their flight with shameful shears;
Till shifts came short and loves were hard to hire,
When lilt of song nor twitch of twangling wire
  Could buy thee bread or kisses; when light fame
Spurned like a ball and haled through brake and briar,
  Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name!

Poor splendid wings so frayed and soiled and torn!
  Poor kind wild eyes so dashed with light quick tears!
Poor perfect voice, most blithe when most forlorn,
  That rings athwart the sea whence no man steers
  Like joy-bells crossed with death-bells in our ears!
What far delight has cooled the fierce desire
  That like some ravenous bird was strong to tire
  On that frail flesh and soul consumed with flame,
But left more sweet than roses to respire,
  Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name?

ENVOI

Prince of sweet songs made out of tears and fire,
A harlot was thy nurse, a God thy sire;

Shame soiled thy song, and song assoiled thy shame.
But from thy feet now death has washed the mire,
Love reads out first at head of all our quire,
Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

ALAS, FOR THE FLEET WINGS OF TIME

(Ballade to François Villon)

Where, prithee, are thy comrades bold
With ruffle and with furbelow,
Who, in the merry days of old,
Made light of all but red wine's flow?
Where now are cavalier and beau
Who joyed with thee in that bright clime?
Ah, dust to dust!—and none may know!—
Alas, for the fleet wings of Time!

Where now are they that gleaming gold
Led on to many a bandit blow,
Who roamed with thee the vine-clad wold
And shadowed vales, and shared thy woe?
Where they who in the sunset glow
With thee heard Paris' sweet bells chime?
Ah, they are gone!—and still men go!—
Alas, for the fleet wings of Time!

And where are they, those maids untold,
Thy lighter loves, each one thy foe?
No more are they than crumbled mold,
With earth above and earth below;
And she who won, aside to throw
Thy love, the promise of thy prime,
Doth any seek her name? ah, no!—
Alas, for the fleet wings of Time!

Singer of ballade and rondeau,
  Deft shaper of the dancing rhyme,
Thy name alone survives the snow;—
  Alas, for the fleet wings of Time!

Clinton Scollard

VILLON QUITS FRANCE

"Demain tous nous mourrons; c'est juste notre affaire."
—*Théodore Passerat.*

We hang to-morrow, then? That doom is fit
For most of us, I think. Yet, harkee, friend,
I have a ballad here which I have writ
Of us and our high ending. Pray you, send
The scrawl to Cayeux, bidding him commend
François to grace. Old Colin loves me well,
For no good reason, save it so befell
We two were young together. . . . When I am hung,
Colin will weep—and then will laugh, and tell
How many pranks we played when we were young.

Dear lads of yesterday! . . . We had no wit
To live always so we might not offend,
Yet—how we laughed! I marvel now at it,
Because that merry company will spend
No more mad nights together. Some are penned
In abbeys, some in dungeons, others fell
In battle. . . . Time assesses death's *gabelle*,—
Salt must be taxed, eh?—well, we ranked among
The salt of earth, once, who are old and tell
How many pranks we played when we were young.

Afraid to die, you ask?—Why, not a whit.
Ah, no! whole-heartedly I mean to wend
Out of a world I have found exquisite
By every testing. For I apprehend
Life was not made all lovely to the end
That life ensnare us, nor the miracle

Of youth devised but as a trap to swell
Old Legion's legions; and must give full tongue
To praise no less than prayer, when bidden tell
How many pranks we played when we were young.

Nay, cheerily we of the Cockle-shell,
And all whose youth was nor to stay nor quell,
Will dare foregather when earth's knell is rung,
And Calvary's young conqueror bids us tell
How many pranks we played when we were young.

James Branch Cabell

RONSARD RE-VOICES A TRUISM

"Quand vous serez bien vieille, et quand je serais mort."
—*Théodore Passerat.*

When you are very old, and I am gone,
Not to return, it may be you will say—
Hearing my name and holding me as one
Long dead to you,—in some half-jesting way
Of speech, sweet as vague heraldings of May
Rumored in woods when first the throstles sing:—
He loved me once. And straightway murmuring
My half-forgotten rhymes, you will regret
Evanished times when I was wont to sing
So very lightly, *Love runs into debt.*

I shall not heed you then. My course being run
For good or ill, I shall have gone my way,
And know you, love, no longer,—nor the sun,
Perchance, nor any light of earthly day,
Nor any joy nor sorrow,—while at play
The world speeds merrily, nor reckoning
Our coming or our going. Lips will cling,
Forswear, and be forsaken, and men forget
Where once our tombs were, and our children sing—
So very lightly!—*Love runs into debt.*

If in the grave love have dominion
Will that wild cry not quicken the wise clay,
And taunt with memories of fond deeds undone—
Some joy untasted, some lost holiday,—
All death's large wisdom? Will that wisdom lay
The ghost of any sweet familiar thing
Come haggard from the Past, or ever bring
Forgetfulness of those two lovers met
When all was April?—nor too wise to sing
So very lightly, *Love runs into debt.*

Yea, though the years of vain remembering
Draw nigh, and age be drear, yet in the spring
We meet and kiss, whatever hour be set
Wherein all hours attain to harvesting,—
So very lightly Love runs into debt.

James Branch Cabell

BALLADE OF WOMEN

(Théodore de Banville)

My friend, from China to Peru,
  And where the Baltic breezes blow,
There's many a dainty Kate and Prue,
  Full worth thy wandering to and fro:
  And Buda hath, like Bergamo,
Her nymphs whose glance enchantment carries
  But *woman*—would you call her *so*—
Woman, my friend, is ware of Paris!

We of her flock are tried and true.
  With rose and frill and flounce and bow,
She's passing dainty to the view:
  To slander her is woe on woe:
  For like the poster of a show
She lies; and ne'er her tongue miscarries
  Once it is set against a foe,
—Woman, my friend, is ware of Paris!

The dress she wears hath fairy hue,
  The fare she craves is light as snow,
The lore she reads is strange and new,
  The plays she loves with passion glow!
  She for whom lofty Troy lay low
Loved fewer than mylady marries,
  For plainly would I have you know
Woman, my friend, is ware of Paris!

ENVOI

Fair Sir, from this I may not go—
  Behind the worth of woman tarries
The utmost praise of man: but, oh,
  Woman, my friend, is ware of Paris!

Archibald T. Strong

BALLADE OF THE NIGHTINGALE

(Théodore de Banville)

Two lonely lovers, young and lovely, stray
  Beneath the hawthorn by the river's flow,
He blithe and gallant as a summer's day,
  She, lingering still with pensive step and slow,
  Albeit her eyes with tender radiance glow.
  The magic time of song and passion nears,
  Beside his lady, that with rapture hears,
His song up-soaring from the listening vale,
  Hark! To the stars he loves, his radiant peers,
Deep in the forest sings the nightingale.

Swift spells of love her maiden spirit sway,
  Her lovely body thrills in passion's throe,
She quivers as the hawthorn's dancing spray
  Upon her eyes joy and enchantment grow.
  Her fairy hand, whiter than purest snow,
  An instant on the moonlit sward appears,

And o'er the beck there streameth on her ears
The shower of liquid song that fills the vale
With fire and anguish of the vanished years—
Deep in the forest sings the nightingale.

They whisper soft: the furtive airs at play
Pass on their brows divinely to and fro:
She swoons for joy and fear: and 'neath the may
Where slow and still the drowsy waters go
Fast in her lover's arms she lieth low.
Flecked with the sheen that through the coppice peers
And wooed of every wind that shifts and veers,
Shaken, exultant, in the moonlight pale,
His neck a-glitter with the evening's tears,
Deep in the forest sings the nightingale.

ENVOI

His burst of passionate grief the bird uprears;
Then, mazed with all the magic of the spheres,
He stays his song, and swift from heaven doth fail
The glory that the soul of Love reveres:
Deep in the forest sings the nightingale.

Archibald T. Strong

BALLADE FOR THE LAUREATE

(After Théodore de Banville)

Rhyme, in a late disdainful age,
Hath many and many an eager knight,
Each man of them, to print his page,
From every quarter wings his flight!
What tons of manuscript alight
Here in the Row, how many a while
For all can rhyme, when all can write—
The master's yonder in the Isle!

Like Otus some, with giant rage,
  But scarcely with a giant's might,
Ossa on Pelion engage
  To pile, and scale Parnassus' height!
  And some, with subtle nets and slight,
Entangle rhymes exceeding vile,*
  And wond'rous adjectives unite—
The master's yonder in the Isle!

Alas, the Muse they cannot cage
  These poets in a sorry plight!
Vain is the weary war they wage,
  In vain they curse the Critic's spite!
While grammar some neglect outright,
  While others polish with the file,
The Fates contrive their toil to blight—
  The master's yonder in the Isle!

ENVOY

Prince, Arnold's jewel-work is bright,
  And Browning, in his iron style,
Doth gold on his rude anvil smite—
  The master's yonder in the Isle!

Andrew Lang

THE BALLAD OF MELICERTES

In Memory of Théodore de Banville

Death, a light outshining life, bids heaven resume
  Star by star the souls whose light made earth divine.
Death, a night outshining day, sees burn and bloom
  Flower by flower, and sun by sun, the fames that shine
  Deathless, higher than life beheld their sovereign sign.
Dead Simonides of Ceos, late restored,

* For example 'dawning' and 'warning.'

Given again of God, again by man deplored,
  Shone but yestereve, a glory frail as breath.
Frail? But Fame's breath quickens, kindles, keeps in ward,
  Life so sweet as this that dies and casts off death.

Mother's love, and rapture of the sea, whose womb
  Breeds eternal life of joy that stings like brine,
Pride of song, and joy to dare the singer's doom,
  Sorrow soft as sleep and laughter bright as wine,
  Flushed and filled with fragrant fire his lyric line.
As the sea-shell utters, like a stricken chord,
Music uttering all the sea's within it stored,
  Poet well-beloved, whose praise our sorrow saith,
So thy songs retain thy soul, and so record
  Life so sweet as this that dies and casts off death.

Side by side we mourned at Gautier's golden tomb:
  Here in spirit now I stand and mourn at thine.
Yet no breath of death strikes thence, no shadow of gloom,
  Only light more bright than gold of the inmost mine,
  Only steam of incense warm from love's own shrine.
Not the darkling stream, the sundering Stygian ford,
Not the hour that smites and severs as a sword,
  Not the night subduing light that perisheth,
Smite, subdue, divide from us by doom abhorred,
  Life so sweet as this that dies and casts off death.

Prince of song more sweet than honey, lyric lord,
Not thy France here only mourns a light adored,
  One whose love-lit fame the world inheriteth.
Strangers too, now brethren, hail with heart's accord
  Life so sweet as this that dies and casts off death.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

THÉODORE DE BANVILLE

BALLADE

For the Funeral of the Last of the Joyous Poets.

One ballade more before we say good-night,
  O dying Muse, one mournful ballade more!
Then let the new men fall to their delight,
  The Impressionist, the Decadent, a score
  Of other fresh fanatics, who adore
Quaint demons, and disdain thy golden shrine;
Ah! faded goddess, thou wert held divine
  When we were young! But now each laurelled head
Has fallen, and fallen the ancient glorious line;
  The last is gone, since Banville too is dead.

Peace, peace a moment, dolorous Ibsenite!
  Pale Tolstoist, moaning from the Euxine shore!
Psychology, to dreamland take thy flight!
  And, fell Heredity, forbear to pour
  Drop after drop thy dose of hellebore,
For we look back to-night to ruddier wine
And gayer singing than these moans of thine!
  Our skies were azure once, our roses red,
Our poets once were crowned with eglantine;
  The last is gone, since Banville too is dead.

With flutes and lyres and many a lovely rite
  Through the mad woodland of our youth they bore
Verse, like pure ichor in a chrysolite,
  Secret yet splendid, and the world forswore,
  For one brief space, the mocking mask it wore.
Then failed, then fell those children of the vine,—
Sons of the sun,—and sank in slow decline;
  Pulse after pulse their radiant lives were shed;
To silence we their vocal names consign;
  The last is gone, since Banville too is dead.

ENVOI

Prince-jeweller, whose facet-rhymes combine
All hues that glow, all rays that shift and shine,
  Farewell! thy song is sung, thy splendour fled.
No bards to Aganippe's wave incline;
  The last is gone, since Banville too is dead.

Edmund Gosse

BALLADE DES ENFANTS SANS SOUCI

(From Albert Glatigny)

These children, oftener barefoot wayfaring,
For winter gloves wear a numb finger-ache,
Sup on a draught of air at evening,
And on their brows the ragged north winds rake
Loud-chiding, as when armies onset make.
But little better can it them befall
When flying April the dry earth shall slake.
—They take no thought. Your pity on them all!

When at the starry hollow's quivering
Their clear eyes dance and lighten like a lake,
They have no more than a worm's covering.
Onward and outward where the sheer hills break,
On down the vale! But all men answer make—
"You little birds, one further flight must take!"
—They take no thought. Your pity on them all!

Such death of cold must their poor bodies wring!
Their blood is iced and curdled to a cake.
All hearts shut to them with an iron spring,
And unsepúlchered lie they in the brake,
Or meadow, where they moulder till they wake.
To that stark supper then the crows will fall;
Snow-showers shall wash them, falling flake by flake.
—They take no thought. Your pity on them all!

ENVOY

This life is one long web of bale and ache.
Only a 'thank you' canst thou hear them call,
O outcast song, made outcast for their sake!
—They take no thought. Your pity on them all!

O. Elton

THE BALLAD OF DEAD CITIES

To A. L.

Where are the cities of the plain?
  And where the shrines of rapt Bethel?
And Calah built of Tubal-Cain?
  And Shinar whence King Amraphel
  Came out in arms, and fought, and fell,
Decoyed into the pits of slime
  By Siddim, and sent sheer to hell;
Where are the cities of old time?

Where now is Karnak, that great fane
  With granite built, a miracle?
And Luxor smooth without a stain,
  Whose graven scriptures still we spell?
  The jackal and the owl may tell,
Dark snakes around their ruins climb,
  They fade like echo in a shell;
Where are the cities of old time?

And where is white Shushan, again,
  Where Vashti's beauty bore the bell,
And all the Jewish oil and grain
  Were brought to Mithridath to sell,
  Where Nehemiah would not dwell,
Because another town sublime
  Decoyed him with her oracle?
Where are the cities of old time?

ENVOI

Prince, with a dolorous, ceaseless knell,
  Above their wasted toil and crime
The waters of oblivion swell;
  Where are the cities of old time?

Edmund Gosse

BALLADE OF DEAD CITIES *

To E. W. Gosse

The dust of Carthage and the dust
Of Babel on the desert wold,
The loves of Corinth, and the lust,
Orchomenos increased with gold;
The town of Jason, over-bold,
And Cherson, smitten in her prime—
What are they but a dream half-told?
Where are the cities of old time?

In towns that were a kingdom's trust,
In dim Atlantic forests' fold,
The marble wasteth to a crust,
The granite crumbles into mould;
O'er these—left nameless from of old—
As over Shinar's brick and slime,
One vast forgetfulness is roll'd—
Where are the cities of old time?

The lapse of ages, and the rust,
The fire, the frost, the waters cold,
Efface the evil and the just;
From Thebes, that Eriphyle sold,

* From *Ballades and Verses Vain* by Andrew Lang. Copyright 1884 by Charles Scribner's Sons, Publishers.

To drown'd Caer-Is, whose sweet bells toll'd
Beneath the wave a dreamy chime
That echo'd from the mountain-hold,—
"Where are the cities of old time?"

ENVOI

Prince, all thy towns and cities must
Decay as these, till all their crime,
And mirth, and wealth, and toil are thrust
Where are the cities of old time.

Andrew Lang

WHERE ARE THE SHIPS OF TYRE?

Hark, how the surges dash
  On Tyrian beaches hoar!
With far-resounding crash,
  And unremitting roar,
  The white foam-squadrons pour
Their ranks with sullen ire
  Along the sandy floor;
"Where are the ships of Tyre?"

Within her walls the clash
  Of arms is heard no more;
No supple bough of ash
  Is hewn for mast or oar;
  Through no tall temple's door
Now gleams the altar fire,
  But winds and waves deplore,
"Where are the ships of Tyre?"

By night no torches flash
  From porches as of yore;
'Neath sword or stinging lash
  No slave now lies in gore;

No voice that men adore
Lifts song to lute or lyre;
With all the freight they bore
"Where are the ships of Tyre?"

ENVOY

Prince, with those "gone before,"
We, whom these days inspire,
Must seek that unknown shore
"Where are the ships of Tyre."

Clinton Scollard

DEAD POETS

Where be they that once would sing,
Poets passed from wood and dale?
Faintly, now, we touch the string,
Faithless, now, we seek the Grail:
Shakspeare, Spenser, nought avail,
Herrick, England's Oberon,
Sidney, smitten through his mail,
Souls of Poets dead and gone!

Ronsard's Roses blossoming
Long are faded, long are frail;
Gathered to the heart of Spring
He that sang the breezy flail.
Ah! could prayer at all prevail,
These should shine where once they shone,
These should 'scape the shadowy pale—
Souls of Poets dead and gone!

What clear air knows Dante's wing?
What new seas doth Homer sail?
By what waters wandering
Tells Theocritus his tale?

Still, when cries the Nightingale,
Singing, sobbing, on and on,
Her brown feathers seem to veil
Souls of Poets dead and gone!

Charon, when my ghost doth hail
O'er Cocytus' waters wan,
Land me where no storms assail
Souls of Poets dead and gone.

Graham R. Tomson

A BALLAD OF APPEAL

To Christina G. Rossetti

Song wakes with every wakening year
From hearts of birds that only feel
Brief spring's deciduous flower-time near:
And song more strong to help or heal
Shall silence worse than winter seal?
From love-lit thought's remurmuring cave
The notes that rippled, wave on wave,
Were clear as love, as faith were strong;
And all souls blessed the soul that gave
Sweet water from the well of song.

All hearts bore fruit of joy to hear,
All eyes felt mist upon them steal
For joy's sake, trembling toward a tear,
When, loud as marriage-bells that peal,
Or flutelike soft, or keen like steel,
Sprang the sheer music; sharp or grave,
We heard the drift of winds that drave,
And saw, swept round by ghosts in throng,
Dark rocks, that yielded, where they clave,
Sweet water from the well of song.

Blithe verse made all the dim sense clear
  That smiles of babbling babes conceal:
Prayer's perfect heart spake here: and here
  Rose notes of blameless woe and weal,
  More soft than this poor song's appeal.
Where orchards bask, where cornfields wave,
They dropped like rains that cleanse and lave,
  And scattered all the year along,
Like dewfall on an April grave,
  Sweet water from the well of song.

Ballad, go bear our prayer, and crave
Pardon, because thy lowlier stave
  Can do this plea no right, but wrong.
Ask nought beside thy pardon, save
  Sweet water from the well of song.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

HEARTSEASE COUNTRY

To Isabel Swinburne

The far green westward heavens are bland,
  The far green Wiltshire downs are clear
As these deep meadows hard at hand;
  The sight knows hardly far from near,
  Nor morning joy from evening cheer.
In cottage garden-plots their bees
Find many a fervent flower to seize
  And strain and drain the heart away
From ripe sweet-williams and sweet-peas
  At every turn on every way.

But gladliest seems one flower to expand
  Its whole sweet heart all round us here;
'Tis Heartsease Country, Pansy Land.
  Nor sounds nor savors harsh and drear
  Where engines yell and halt and veer
Can vex the sense of him who sees

One flower-plot midway, that for trees
  Has poles, and sheds all grimed or gray
For bowers like those that take the breeze
  At every turn on every way.

Content even there they smile and stand,
  Sweet thought's heart-easing flowers, nor fear,
With reek and roaring steam though fanned,
  Nor shrink nor perish as they peer.
  The heart's eye holds not those more dear
That glow between the lanes and leas
Where'er the homeliest hand may please
  To bid them blossom as they may
Where light approves and wind agrees
  At every turn on every way.

Sister, the word of winds and seas
Endures not as the word of these
  Your wayside flowers whose breath would say
How hearts that love may find heart's ease
  At every turn on every way.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

BALLADE OF DEAD ACTORS

To E. J. H.

Where are the passions they essayed,
And where the tears they made to flow?
Where the wild humours they portrayed
For laughing worlds to see and know?
Othello's wrath and Juliet's woe?
Sir Peter's whims and Timon's gall?
And Millamant and Romeo?
Into the night go one and all.

Where are the braveries, fresh or frayed?
The plumes, the armours—friend and foe?
The cloth of gold, the rare brocade,
The mantles glittering to and fro?

The pomp, the pride, the royal show?
The cries of war and festival?
The youth, the grace, the charm, the glow?
Into the night go one and all.

The curtain falls, the play is played:
The Beggar packs beside the Beau;
The Monarch troops, and troops the Maid;
The Thunder huddles with the Snow.
Where are the revellers high and low?
The clashing swords? The lover's call?
The dancers gleaming row on row?
Into the night go one and all.

ENVOY

Prince, in one common overthrow
The Hero tumbles with the Thrall:
As dust that drives, as straws that blow,
Into the night go one and all.

W. E. Henley

A BALLADE OF KINGS

Where are the mighty kings of yore
  Whose sword-arm cleft the world in twain?
And where are they who won and wore
  The empire of the land and main?
  Where's Alexander, Charlemain?
Alone the sky above them brings
  Their tombs the tribute of the rain.
Dust in dust are the bones of kings!

Where now is Rome's old emperor,
  Who gazed on burning Rome full fain;
And where, at one for evermore,
  The Liege of France, the Lord of Spain?
  What of Napoleon's lightning brain,
Grim Fritz's iron hammerings,
  Forging the links of Europe's chain?
Dust in dust are the bones of kings!

Where, 'neath what ravenous curses sore,
  Hath Well-Loved Louis lapsed and lain?
Where is the Lion-Heart, who bore
  The spears toward Zion's gate again?
  And can so little space contain,
Quiet from all his wanderings,
  The world-demanding Tamburlaine?
Dust in dust are the bones of kings!

ENVOY

O Kings, bethink ye then how vain
  The pride and pomp of earthly things:
A little pain, a little gain,
  Then dust in dust are the bones of kings.

Arthur Symons

BALLADE OF DEAD POETS

Theocritus, who bore
  The lyre where sleek herds graze
On the Sicilian shore,
  (There yet the shepherd strays)—
  And Horace, crowned with bays,
Who dwelt by Tiber's flow,
  Sleep through the silent days—
For God will have it so!

The bard, whose requiem o'er
  And o'er the sad sea plays,
Who sang of classic lore,
  Of Mab, the queen of fays—
  And Keats, fair Adonais,
The child of song and woe,
  No longer thread life's maze—
For God will have it so!

Your voices, sweet of yore,
  With honied word and phrase,
Are heard by men no more,
  They list to other lays—

New poets now have praise,
But all in turn must go
To follow in your ways—
For God will have it so!

ENVOY

Poets, the thrones ye raise
Are not a "fleeting show;"
Fame lives, though dust decays—
For God will have it so!

Clinton Scollard

BALLADE OF OLD PLAYS *

To Brander Matthews

(Les Œuvres de Monsieur Molière. Á Paris, chez Louys Billaine, à la Palme. M. D. C. LXVI)

LA COUR

When these Old Plays were new, the King,
Beside the Cardinal's chair,
Applauded, 'mid the courtly ring,
The verses of Molière;
Point-lace was then the only wear,
Old Corneille came to woo,
And bright Du Parc was young and fair,
When these Old Plays were new!

LA COMÉDIE

How shrill the butcher's cat-calls ring,
How loud the lackeys swear!
Black pipe-bowls on the stage they fling,
At Brécourt, fuming there!

* From *Ballades and Verses Vain* by Andrew Lang. Copyright 1884 by Charles Scribner's Sons, Publishers.

The Porter's stabbed! a Mousquetaire
Breaks in with noisy crew—
'Twas all a commonplace affair
When these Old Plays were new!

LA VILLE

When these Old Plays were new! They bring
A host of phantoms rare:
Old jests that float, old jibes that sting,
Old faces peaked with care:
Ménage's smirk, de Visé's stare,
The thefts of Jean Ribou,—*
Ah, publishers were hard to bear
When these Old Plays were new.

ENVOY

Ghosts, at your Poet's word ye dare
To break Death's dungeons through,
And frisk, as in that golden air,
When these Old Plays were new!

Andrew Lang

ON A FAN THAT BELONGED TO THE MARQUISE DE POMPADOUR

Chicken-skin, delicate, white,
  Painted by Carlo Vanloo,
Loves in a riot of light,
  Roses and vaporous blue;
  Hark to the dainty *frou-frou!*
Picture above if you can,
  Eyes that could melt as the dew,—
This was the Pompadour's fan!

See how they rise at the sight,
  Thronging the *Œil de Bœuf* through,
Courtiers as butterflies bright,
  Beauties that Fragonard drew,

* A knavish publisher.

Talon-rouge, falbala, queue,
Cardinal, Duke,—to a man,
Eager to sigh or to sue,—
This was the Pompadour's fan!

Ah! but things more than polite
Hung on this toy, *voyez-vous!*
Matters of state and of might,
Things that great ministers do;
Things that, maybe, overthrew
Those in whose brains they began;
Here was the sign and the cue,—
This was the Pompadour's fan!

ENVOY

Where are the secrets it knew?
Weavings of plot and of plan?
—But where is the Pompadour, too?
This was the Pompadour's *Fan!*

Austin Dobson

BALLADE OF ANTIQUE DANCES

Before the town had lost its wits,
And scared the bravery from its beaux:
When money-grubs were merely cits,
And verse was crisp and clear as prose,
Ere Chloë and Strephon came to blows
For votes, degrees, and cigarettes,
The world rejoiced to point its toes
In Gigues, Gavottes, and Minuets.

The solemn fiddlers touch their kits;
The twinkling clavichord o'erflows
With contrapuntal quirks and hits;
And, with all measure and repose,
Through figures grave as royal shows,
With noble airs and pirouettes,
They move, to rhythms HANDEL knows,
In Gigues, Gavottes, and Minuets.

O Fans and Swords, O Sacques and Mits,
  That was the better part you chose!
You know not how those gamesome chits
  Waltz, Polka, and Schottische arose,
  Or how Quadrille—a kind of doze
In time and tune—the dance besets;
  You aired your fashion till the close
In Gigues, Gavottes, and Minuets.

ENVOY

  Muse of the many-twinkling hose,
TERPSICHORE, O teach your pets
  The charm that shines, the grace that glows
In Gigues, Gavottes, and Minuets.

W. E. Henley

BALLADE OF A TOYOKUNI COLOUR PRINT

To W. A.

Was I a Samurai renowned,
Two-sworded, fierce, immense of bow?
A histrion angular and profound?
A priest? a porter?—Child, although
I have forgotten clean, I know
That in the shade of Fujisan,
What time the cherry-orchards blow,
I loved you once in old Japan.

As here you loiter, flowing-gowned
And hugely sashed, with pins a-row
Your quaint head as with flamelets crowned,
Demure, inviting—even so,
When merry maids in Miyako
To feel the sweet o' the year began,
And green gardens to overflow,
I loved you once in old Japan.

Clear shine the hills; the rice-fields round
Two cranes are circling; sleepy and slow,
A blue canal the lake's blue bound
Breaks at the bamboo bridge; and lo!

Touched with the sundown's spirit and glow,
I see you turn, with flirted fan,
Against the plum-tree's bloomy snow . . .
I loved you once in old Japan!

ENVOY

Dear, 'twas a dozen lives ago;
But that I was a lucky man
The Toyokuni here will show:
I loved you—once—in old Japan.

W. E. Henley

BALLADE OF THE UNCHANGING BEAUTY

On every wind there comes the dolorous cry
  Of change, and rumour vast of fair things sped,
And old perfections loudly doomed to die;
  Axes agleam and running torches red,
  And voices shrilling, "The old world is dead!"
Yet little heed to all this noise I pay,
  But lift my eyes where, walking overhead,
The moon goes silently upon her way.

For what concern with all this change have I,
  Knowing the same wild words of old were said?
For change, too, changes not; yea, this old sky
  Watches mankind the same vain pathway tread.
  So long ago thrones crashed, and nations bled,
Yet the old world stole back at close of day,
  And on the morrow men rose up to wed—
The moon goes silently upon her way.

Abbess of all yon cloistered worlds on high,
  Upon my heart your benediction shed,
Help me to put the idle turmoil by,
  And on the changeless be my spirit fed;
  O be my footsteps on that pathway led
Where Beauty steals among the stars to pray;
  And, sorrowing earth, in this be comforted—
The moon goes silently upon her way.

ENVOI

Prince, toss not too uneasy on your bed,
  Fearing your little crown be reft away;
Wear this undying wreath I weave instead—
  The moon goes silently upon her way.
Richard Le Gallienne

BALLADE OF THE SONG OF THE SEA-WIND *

What is the song the sea-wind sings—
  The old, old song it singeth for aye?
When abroad it stretcheth its mighty wings
  And driveth the white clouds far away,—
  What is the song it sings to-day?
From fire and tumult the white world came,
  Where all was a mist of driven spray
  And the whirling fragments of a frame!

What is the song the sea-wind sings—
  The old, old song it singeth for aye?
It seems to breathe a thousand things
  Ere the world grew sad and old and grey—
  Of the dear gods banished far astray—
Of strange wild rumours of joy and shame!
  The Earth is old, so old, To-day—
  Blind and halt and weary and lame.

What is the song the sea-wind sings—
  The old, old song it singeth for aye?
Like a trumpet blast its voice out-rings,
  The world spins down the darksome way!
  It crieth aloud in dark dismay,
The Earth that from fire and tumult came
  Draws swift to her weary end To-day,
  Her fires are fusing for that last Flame!

* This poem belongs in the division in which Adaptations are included.

ENVOY

What singeth the sea-wind thus for aye—
From fire and tumult the white world came!
What is the sea-wind's cry To-day—
Her central fires make one vast flame!

William Sharp

BALLADE OF THE SEA-FOLK

Where are the creatures of the deep,
That made the sea-world wondrous fair?
The dolphins that with royal sweep
Sped Venus of the golden hair
Through leagues of summer sea and air?
Are they all gone where past things be?
The merman in his weedy lair?
O sweet wild creatures of the sea!

O singing syrens, do ye weep
That now ye hear not anywhere
The swift oars of the seamen leap,
See their wild, eager eyes a-stare?
O syrens, that no more ensnare
The souls of men that once were free,
Are ye not filled with cold despair—
O sweet wild creatures of the sea!

O Triton, on some coral steep
In green-gloom depths, dost thou forbear
With wreathëd horn to call thy sheep,
The wandering sea-waves, to thy care?
O mermaids, once so debonnair,
Sport ye no more with mirthful glee?
The ways of lover-folk forswear?—
O sweet wild creatures of the sea!

ENVOY

Deep down 'mid coral caves, beware!
  They wait a day that yet must be,
When Ocean shall be earth's sole heir—
  O sweet wild creatures of the sea!

William Sharp

A BALLAD OF SARK

High beyond the granite portal arched across,
  Like the gateway of some godlike giant's hold
Sweep and swell the billowy breasts of moor and moss
  East and westward, and the dell their slopes enfold
  Basks in purple, glows in green, exults in gold.
Glens that know the dove and fells that hear the lark
Fill with joy the rapturous island, as an ark
  Full of spicery wrought from herb and flower and tree,
None would dream that grief even here may disembark
  On the wrathful woful marge of earth and sea.

Rocks emblazoned like the mid shield's royal boss
  Take the sun with all their blossom broad and bold.
None would dream that all this moorland's glow and gloss
  Could be dark as tombs that strike the spirit acold,
  Even in eyes that opened here, and here behold
Now no sun relume from hope's belated spark,
Any comfort, nor may ears of mourners hark
  Though the ripe woods ring with golden-throated glee,
While the soul lies shattered, like a stranded bark
  On the wrathful woful marge of earth and sea.

Death and doom are they whose crested triumphs toss
  On the proud plumed waves whence mourning notes
    are tolled.
Wail of perfect woe and moan for utter loss
  Raise the bride-song through the graveyard on the wold
  Where the bride-bed keeps the bridegroom fast in mould,
Where the bride, with death for priest and doom for clerk,

Hears for choir the throats of waves like wolves that bark,
Sore anhungered, off the drear Eperquerie,
Fain to spoil the strongholds of the strength of Sark
On the wrathful woful marge of earth and sea.

Prince of storm and tempest, lord whose ways are dark,
Wind whose wings are spread for flight that none may mark,
Lightly dies the joy that lives by grace of thee.
Love through thee lies bleeding, hope lies cold and stark,
On the wrathful woful marge of earth and sea.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

IN THE WATER

The sea is awake, and the sound of the song of the joy of her waking is rolled
From afar to the star that recedes from anear to the wastes of the wild wide shore.
Her call is a trumpet compelling us homeward: if dawn in her east be acold,
From the sea shall we crave not her grace to rekindle the life that it kindled before
Her breath to requicken, her bosom to rock us, her kisses to bless as of yore?
For the wind, with his wings half open, at pause in the sky, neither fettered nor free,
Leans waveward and flutters the ripple of laughter; and fain would the twain of us be
Where lightly the wave yearns forward from under the curve of the deep dawn's dome,
And full of the morning and fired with the pride of the glory thereof and the glee,
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and beseeches, athirst for the foam.

Life holds not an hour that is better to live in: the past is a tale that is told,
The future a sun-flecked shadow, alive and asleep, with a blessing in store.

As we give us again to the waters, the rapture of limbs that
the waters enfold
Is less than the rapture of spirit whereby, though the burden
it quits were sore,
Our souls and the bodies they wield at their will are absorbed
in the life they adore—
In the life that endures no burden, and bows not the fore-
head, and bends not the knee—
In the life everlasting of earth and of heaven, in the laws
that atone and agree,
In the measureless music of things, in the fervor of forces
that rest or that roam,
That cross and return and reissue, as I after you and as you
after me
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and beseeches,
athirst for the foam.

For, albeit he were less than the least of them, haply the
heart of a man may be bold
To rejoice in the word of the sea as a mother's that saith to
the son she bore,
Child, was not the life in thee mine, and my spirit the
breath in thy lips from of old?
Have I let not thy weakness exult in my strength, and thy
foolishness learn of my lore?
Have I helped not or healed not thy anguish, or made not
the might of thy gladness more?
And surely his heart should answer, The light of the love of
my life is in thee.
She is fairer than earth, and the sun is not fairer, the wind
is not blither than she:
From my youth hath she shown me the joy of her bays that
I crossed, of her cliffs that I clomb,
Till now that the twain of us here, in desire of the dawn
and in trust of the sea,
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and beseeches,
athirst for the foam.

ENVOY

Friend, earth is a harbor of refuge for winter, a covert
whereunder to flee
When day is the vassal of night, and the strength of the
hosts of her mightier than he;
But here is the presence adored of me, here my desire is at
rest and at home.
There are cliffs to be climbed upon land, there are ways to
be trodden and ridden: but we
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and beseeches,
athirst for the foam.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

A BALLAD AT PARTING

Sea to sea that clasps and fosters England, uttering evermore
Song eterne and praise immortal of the indomitable shore,
Lifts aloud her constant heart up, south to north and east
to west,
Here in speech that shames all music, there in thunder-
throated roar,
Chiming concord out of discord, waking rapture out of rest.
All her ways are lovely, all her works and symbols are divine,
Yet shall man love best what first bade leap his heart and
bend his knee;
Yet where first his whole soul worshipped shall his soul set
up her shrine:
Nor may love not know the lovelier, fair as both beheld
may be,
Here the limitless north-eastern, there the strait south-
western sea.

Though their chant bear all one burden, as ere man was born
it bore;
Though the burden be diviner than the songs all souls adore;
Yet may love not choose but choose between them which
to love the best.

Me the sea my nursing-mother, me the Channel green and hoar,
  Holds at heart more fast than all things, bares for me the goodlier breast,
Lifts for me the lordlier love-song, bids for me more sunlight shine,
  Sounds for me the stormier trumpet of the sweeter strain to me.
So the broad pale Thames is loved not like the tawny springs of Tyne:
  Choice is clear between them for the soul whose vision holds in fee
  Here the limitless north-eastern, there the strait south-western sea.

Choice is clear, but dear is either; nor has either not in store
Many a likeness, many a written sign of spirit-searching lore,
  Whence the soul takes fire of sweet remembrance, magnified and blest.
Thought of songs whose flame-winged feet have trod the unfooted water-floor.
  When the lord of all the living lords of souls bade speed their quest;
Soft live sound like children's babble down the rippling sand's incline,
  Or the lovely song that loves them, hailed with thankful prayer and plea;
These are parcels of the harvest here whose gathered sheaves are mine,
  Garnered now, but sown and reaped where winds make wild with wrath or glee
  Here the limitless north-eastern, there the strait south-western sea.

Song, thy name is freedom, seeing thy strength was born of breeze and brine,
  Fare now forth and fear no fortune: such a seal is set on thee.

Joy begat and memory bare thee, seeing in spirit a twofold sign,
Even the sign of those thy fosters, each as thou from all time free,
Here the limitless north-eastern, there the strait south-western sea.

Algernon Charles Swinburne.

A BALLAD TO QUEEN ELIZABETH

of the Spanish Armada

King Philip had vaunted his claims;
He had sworn for a year he would sack us;
With an army of heathenish names
He was coming to fagot and stack us;
Like the thieves of the sea he would track us,
And shatter our ships on the main;
But we had bold Neptune to back us,—
And where are the galleons of Spain?

His carackes were christened of dames
To the kirtles whereof he would tack us;
With his saints and his gilded stern-frames,
He had thought like an egg-shell to crack us;
Now Howard may get to his Flaccus,
And Drake to his Devon again,
And Hawkins bowl rubbers to Bacchus,—
For where are the galleons of Spain?

Let his Majesty hang to St. James
The axe that he whetted to hack us;
He must play at some lustier games
Or at sea he can hope to out-thwack us;
To his mines of Peru he would pack us
To tug at his bullet and chain;
Alas! that his Greatness should lack us!—
But where are the galleons of Spain?

ENVOY

GLORIANA!—the don may attack us
Whenever his stomach be fain;
He must reach us before he can rack us, . . .
And where are the galleons of Spain?

Austin Dobson

"O NAVIS"

Ship, to the roadstead rolled,
What dost thou?—O, once more
Regain the port. Behold!
Thy sides are bare of oar,
Thy tall mast wounded sore
Of Africus, and see,
What shall thy spars restore!—
Tempt not the tyrant sea!

What cable now will hold
When all drag out from shore!
What god canst thou, too bold,
In time of need implore!
Look! for thy sails flap o'er,
Thy stiff shrouds part and flee,
Fast—fast thy seams outpour,—
Tempt not the tyrant sea!

What though thy ribs of old
The pines of Pontus bore!
Not now to stern of gold
Men trust, or painted prore!
Thou, or thou count'st it store
A toy of winds to be,
Shun thou the Cyclads' roar,—
Tempt not the tyrant sea!

ENVOY

Ship of the State, before
  A care, and now to me
A hope in my heart's core,—
  Tempt not the tyrant sea!
Austin Dobson

BALLADE OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS

Fair islands of the silver fleece,
  Hoards of unsunned, uncounted gold,
Whose havens are the haunts of Peace,
  Whose boys are in our quarrel bold;
Our bolt is shot, our tale is told,
  Our ship of state in storms may toss,
But ye are young if we are old,
  Ye Islands of the Southern Cross!

Aye, *we* must dwindle and decrease,
  Such fates the ruthless years unfold;
And yet we shall not wholly cease,
  We shall not perish unconsoled;
Nay, still shall Freedom keep her hold
  Within the sea's inviolate fosse,
And boast her sons of English mould,
  Ye Islands of the Southern Cross!

All empires tumble—Rome and Greece—
  Their swords are rust, their altars cold!
For us, the Children of the Seas,
  Who ruled where'er the waves have rolled,
For us, in Fortune's books enscrolled,
  I read no runes of hopeless loss;
Nor—while *ye* last—our knell is tolled,
  Ye Islands of the Southern Cross!

ENVOY

Britannia, when thy hearth's a-cold,
  When o'er thy grave has grown the moss,
Still *Rule Australia* shall be trolled
  In Islands of the Southern Cross!

Andrew Lang

A BALLAD OF BATH

Like a queen enchanted who may not laugh or weep,
  Glad at heart and guarded from change and care like ours,
Girt about with beauty by days and nights that creep
Soft as breathless ripples that softly shoreward sweep,
  Lies the lovely city whose grace no grief deflowers.
Age and grey forgetfulness, time that shifts and veers,
Touch thee not, our fairest, whose charm no rival nears,
  Hailed as England's Florence of one whose praise gives grace,
Landor, once thy lover, a name that love reveres:
  Dawn and noon and sunset are one before thy face.

Dawn whereof we know not, and noon whose fruit we reap,
  Garnered up in record of years that fell like flowers,
Sunset liker sunrise along the shining steep
Whence thy fair face lightens, and where thy soft springs leap,
  Crown at once and gird thee with grace of guardian powers.
Loved of men beloved of us, souls that fame inspheres,
All thine air hath music for him who dreams and hears;
  Voices mixed of multitudes, feet of friends that pace,
Witness why for ever, if heaven's face clouds or clears,
  Dawn and noon and sunset are one before thy face.

Peace hath here found harbourage mild as very sleep:
  Not the hills and waters, the fields and wildwood bowers,
Smile or speak more tenderly, clothed with peace more deep,
Here than memory whispers of days our memories keep
  Fast with love and laughter and dreams of withered hours.

Bright were these as blossom of old, and thought endears
Still the fair soft phantoms that pass with smiles or tears,
  Sweet as roseleaves hoarded and dried wherein we trace
Still the soul and spirit of sense that lives and cheers:
  Dawn and noon and sunset are one before thy face.

City lulled asleep by the chime of passing years,
Sweeter smiles thy rest than the radiance round thy peers;
  Only love and lovely remembrance here have place.
Time on thee lies lighter than music on men's ears;
  Dawn and noon and sunset are one before thy face.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

A BALLADE OF THE NIGHT

Far from the earth the deep-descended day
Lies dim in hidden sanctuaries of sleep.
The winged winds couched on the threshold keep
Uneasy watch, and still expectant stay
The voice that bids their rushing host delay
No more to rise, and with tempestuous power
Rend the wide veil of heaven. Long watching they
Sigh in the silence of the midnight hour.

Hark! where the forests slow in slumber sway
Below the blue wild ridges, steep on steep,
Thronging the sky—how shuddering as they leap
The impetuous waters go their fated way,
And mourn in mountain chasms, and as they stray
By many a magic town and marble tower,
As those that still unreconciled obey,
Sigh in the silence of the midnight hour.

Listen—the quiet darkness doth array
The toiling earth, and there is time to weep—
A deeper sound is mingled with the sweep
Of streams and winds that whisper far away.
Oh listen! where the populous cities lay
Low in the lap of sleep their ancient dower,
The changeless spirit of our changeful clay
Sighs in the silence of the midnight hour.

Sigh, watcher for a dawn remote and gray,
Mourn, journeyer to an undesired deep,
Eternal sower, thou that shalt not reap,
Immortal, whom the plagues of God devour.
Mourn—'tis the hour when thou wert wont to pray.
Sigh in the silence of the midnight hour.

Margaret L. Woods

BALLADE OF WINDY NIGHTS

Have you learnt the sorrow of windy nights
  When lilacs down in the garden moan,
And stars are flickering faint, wan lights,
  And voices whisper in wood and stone?
  When steps on the stairway creak and groan,
And shadowy ghosts take an hour of ease
  In dim-lit galleries all their own?
Do you know the sorrow of nights like these?

Have you lain awake on the windy nights
  Slighted by sleep and to rest unknown,
When keen remorse is a whip that smites
  With every gust on the window blown?
  When phantom Love from a broken throne
Steps down through the Night's torn tapestries,
  Sad-eyed and wistful, and ah! so alone?
Do you know the sorrow of nights like these?

Have you felt a touch on the windy nights—
  The touch of a hand not flesh nor bone,
But a mystical something, pale, that plights
  With waning stars and with dead stars strown?
  Or heard grey lips with the fire all flown
Pleading again in a lull o' the breeze—
  A long life's wreck in a short hour shown?
Do you know the sorrow of nights like these?

Ah, the whirlwind reaped where a wind is sown,
  And the phantom Love in the night one sees!

Ah, the touching hand and the pleading tone!
Do you know the sorrow of nights like these?
Will H. Ogilvie

BALLADE OF CHRISTMAS GHOSTS

Between the moonlight and the fire
In winter twilights long ago,
What ghosts we raised for your desire
To make your merry blood run slow!
How old, how grave, how wise we grow!
No Christmas ghost can make us chill,
Save *those* that troop in mournful row,
The ghosts we all can raise at will!

The beasts can talk in barn and byre
On Christmas Eve, old legends know,
As year by year the years retire,
We men fall silent then I trow,
Such sights hath Memory to show,
Such voices from the silence thrill,
Such shapes return with Christmas snow,—
The ghosts we all can raise at will.

Oh, children of the village choir,
Your carols on the midnight throw,
Oh, bright across the mist and mire,
Ye ruddy hearths of Christmas glow!
Beat back the dread, beat down the woe,
Let's cheerily descend the hill;
Be welcome all, to come or go,
The ghosts we all can raise at will!

ENVOY

Friend, *sursum corda*, soon or slow
We part, like guests who've joyed their fill;
Forget them not, nor mourn them so,
The ghosts we all can raise at will!

A. Lang

IN WINTER *

Oh, to go back to the days of June,
  Just to be young and alive again,
Hearken again to the mad, sweet tune
  Birds were singing with might and main:
South they flew at the summer's wane,
  Leaving their nests for storms to harry,
Since time was coming for wind and rain
  Under the wintry skies to marry.

Wearily wander by dale and dune
  Footsteps fettered with clanking chain—
Free they were in the days of June,
  Free they never can be again:
Fetters of age, and fetters of pain,
  Joys that fly, and sorrows that tarry—
Youth is over, and hopes were vain
  Under the wintry skies to marry.

Now we chant but a desolate rune—
  Oh, to be young and alive again!
But never December turns to June,
  And length of living is length of pain:
Winds in the nestless trees complain,
  Snows of winter about us tarry,
And never the birds come back again
  Under the wintry skies to marry.

ENVOI

Youths and maidens, blithesome and vain,
  Time makes thrusts that you cannot parry;
Mate in season, for who is fain
  Under the wintry skies to marry?

Louise Chandler Moulton

THE PIXIES

The frost hath spread a shining net
  Where late the autumn roses blew,
On lake and stream a seal is set
  Where floating lilies charmed the view;
  So silently the wonder grew
Beneath pale Dian's mystic light,
  I know my fancies whisper true,
The Pixies are abroad to-night.

When at the midnight chime are met
  Together elves of every hue,
I trow the gazer will regret
  That peers upon their retinue;
  For limb awry and eye askew
Have oft proclaimed a fairy's spite—
  Peep slyly, gallants, lest ye rue,
The Pixies are abroad to-night.

'Tis said their forms are tiny, yet
  All human ills they can subdue,
Or with a wand or amulet
  Can win a maiden's heart for you;
  And many a blessing know to strew
To make the way to wedlock bright;
  Give honour to the dainty crew,
The Pixies are abroad to-night.

ENVOY

Prince, e'en a prince might vainly sue,
  Unaided by a fairy's might;
Remember Cinderella's shoe,
  The Pixies are abroad to-night.

Samuel Minturn Peck

BALLADE TO THEOCRITUS, IN WINTER *

ἰσορῶν τὰν Σικελὰν ἐς ἅλα

Id. viii, 56.

Ah! leave the smoke, the wealth, the roar
Of London, leave the bustling street,
For still, by the Sicilian shore,
The murmur of the Muse is sweet.
Still, still, the suns of summer greet
The mountain-grave of Helikê,
And shepherds still their songs repeat
Where breaks the blue Sicilian sea.

What though they worship Pan no more,
That guarded once the shepherd's seat,
They chatter of their rustic lore,
They watch the wind among the wheat;
Cicalas chirp, the young lambs bleat,
Where whispers pine to cypress tree;
They count the waves that idly beat
Where breaks the blue Sicilian sea.

Theocritus! thou canst restore
The pleasant years, and over-fleet;
With thee we live as men of yore,
We rest where running waters meet:
And then we turn unwilling feet
And seek the world—so must it be—
We may not linger in the heat
Where breaks the blue Sicilian sea!

ENVOY

Master,—when rain, and snow, and sleet
And northern winds are wild, to thee
We come, we rest in thy retreat,
Where breaks the blue Sicilian sea!

Andrew Lang

* From *Ballades and Verses Vain* by Andrew Lang.

FAREWELL, FAREWELL, OLD YEAR

The hungry north wind whines
  Around the barrèd door,
And through the proud old pines
  Is heard its ruthless roar:
  With wailing waves that pour
Their plaint upon the ear,
  It echoes o'er and o'er,
"Farewell, farewell, old year!"

Snow hides the leafless vines
  That fleecy blossoms bore,
In long and lonely lines
  Beside the streamlet's shore,
  For suns that beam no more
Above earth's frozen bier
  The tall bare trees implore,
"Farewell, farewell, old year!"

Yet while warm firelight shines
  On heads both young and hoar,
Although no heart divines
  What fate may have in store,
  Mourn not for days of yore,
But sing with merry cheer
  As blithe as birds that soar,
"Farewell, farewell, old year!"

ENVOY

O friend, as heretofore,
  In spring dark skies will clear,
Buds burst to bloom once more:
  "Farewell, farewell, old year!"

Clinton Scollard

A BALLADE OF THE FIRST RAIN

The sky is blue with summer and the sun,
The woods are brown as autumn with the tan,
It might as well be Tropics and be done,
I might as well be born a copper Khan;
I fashion me an oriental fan
Made of the wholly unreceipted bills
Brought by the ice-man, sleeping in his van
(A storm is coming on the Chiltern Hills).

I read the Young Philosophers for fun
—Fresh as our sorrow for the late Queen Anne—
The Dionysians whom a pint would stun,
The Pantheists who never heard of Pan.
—But through my hair electric needles ran,
And on my book a gout of water spills,
And on the skirts of heaven the guns began
(A storm is coming on the Chiltern Hills).

O fields of England, cracked and dry and dun,
O soul of England, sick of words, and wan!—
The clouds grow dark;—the down-rush has begun.
—It comes, it comes, as holy darkness can,
Black as with banners, ban and arriere-ban;
A falling laughter all the valley fills,
Deep as God's thunder and the thirst of man:
(A storm is coming on the Chiltern Hills).

ENVOI

Prince, Prince-Elective on the modern plan,
Fulfilling such a lot of People's Wills,
You take the Chiltern Hundreds while you can—
A storm is coming on the Chiltern Hills.

G. K. Chesterton

BALLADE OF EASTER DAWN

The gaunt trees black and naked stand,
  And crackle, as the wind sweeps by;
Their boles break the horizon, and
  Their branches arabesque the sky.
  It is the dark hour. Shivering lie
The herds, in silence ominous—
  Then dawn breaks, and there sounds the cry
Of "Resurrexit Dominus!"

Creeps then a soft light o'er the strand,
  And dawn-birds preen their wings to fly.
Across the graying east, a band
  Of brightness stretches, broad and high.
  The early breezes cease to sigh—
A quiet, holy calm in us
  Prepares us for the gladsome cry
Of "Resurrexit Dominus!"

Then, sunrise! And across the land
  Cloud-tints and flower-colors vie;
Earth glows with life at His command—
  The glory of the Lord is nigh!
  A new world born before the eye,
Heaven sheds its quickening balm on us,
  And angels' voices chant the cry
Of "Resurrexit Dominus!"

Lord! In a night our winters die
  And spring inspires her psalm in us;
Death yields to immortality—
  "Sic Resurrexit Dominus!"

Edwin Meade Robinson

BALLADE OF SPRING

There's a noise of coming, going,
  Budding, waking, vast and still.
Hark, the echoes are yeo-hoing
  Loud and sweet from vale and hill!
  Do you hear it? With a will,
In a grandiose lilt and swing,
  Nature's voices shout and trill. . . .
'Tis the symphony of Spring!

Rains are singing, clouds are flowing,
  Ocean thunders, croons the rill,
And the West his clarion's blowing,
  And the sparrow tunes his quill,
  And the thrush is fluting shrill,
And the skylark's on the wing,
  And the merles their hautboys fill—
'Tis the symphony of Spring!

Lambs are bleating, steers are lowing,
  Brisk and rhythmic clacks the mill.
Kapellmeister April, glowing
  And superb with glee and skill,
  Comes, his orchestra to drill
In a music that will ring
  Till the grey world yearn and thrill.
'Tis the symphony of Spring!

ENVOY

Princes, though your blood be chill,
  Here's shall make you leap and fling,
Fling and leap like Jack and Jill!
  'Tis the symphony of Spring.

W. E. Henley

THE BALLAD OF THE THRUSH

Across the noisy street
  I hear him careless throw
One warning utterance sweet;
  Then faint at first, and low,
  The full notes closer grow;
Hark! what a torrent gush!
  They pour, they overflow—
Sing on, sing on, O Thrush!

What trick, what dream's deceit
  Has fooled his fancy so
To scorn of dust and heat?
  I, prisoned here below,
  Feel the fresh breezes blow;
And see, thro' flag and rush,
  Cool water sliding slow—
Sing on, sing on, O Thrush!

Sing on. What though thou beat
  On that dull bar, thy foe!
Somewhere the green boughs meet
  Beyond the roofs a-row;
  Somewhere the blue skies show,
Somewhere no black walls crush
  Poor hearts with hopeless woe—
Sing on, sing on, O Thrush!

ENVOY

Bird, though they come, we know,
  The empty cage, the hush;
Still, ere the brief day go,
  Sing on, sing on, O Thrush!

Austin Dobson

BALLADE OF JUNE

Lilacs glow, and jasmines climb,
  Larks are loud the livelong day.
O the golden summer-prime!
  June takes up the sceptre of May,
  And the land beneath her sway
Glows, a dream of flowerful closes,
  And the very wind's at play
With Sir Love among the roses.

Lights and shadows in the lime
  Meet in exquisite disarray.
Hark! the rich recurrent rhyme
  Of the blackbird's roundelay!
  Where he carols, frank and gay,
Fancy no more glooms or proses;
  Joyously she flits away
With Sir Love among the roses.

O the cool sea's slumberous chime!
  O the links that beach the bay,
Tricked with meadow-sweet and thyme,
  Where the brown bees murmur and stray!
  Lush the hedgerows, ripe the hay!
Many a maiden, binding posies,
  Finds herself at Yea-and-Nay
With Sir Love among the roses.

ENVOI

  Boys and girls, be wise, I pray!
Do as dear Queen June proposes,
  For she bids you troop and stay
With Sir Love among the roses.

W. E. Henley

BALLADE OF ASPIRATION

O to be somewhere by the sea,
  Far from the city's dust and shine,
  From Mammon's priests and from Mammon's
    shrine,
From the stony street, and the grim decree
  That over an inkstand crooks my spine,
From the books that are and the books to be,
  And the need that makes of the sacred Nine
  A school of harridans!—sweetheart mine,
O to be somewhere by the sea!

Under a desk I bend my knee,
  Whether the morn be foul or fine.
  I envy the tramp, in a ditch supine,
Or footing it over the sunlit lea.
  But I struggle and write and make no sign,
For a labouring ox must earn his fee,
  And even a journalist has to dine;
  But O for a breath of the eglantine!
O to be somewhere by the sea!

Out on the links, where the wind blows free,
  And the surges gush, and the rounding brine
  Wanders and sparkles, an air like wine
Fills the senses with pride and glee.
  In neighbour hedges are flowers to twine,
A white sail glimmers, the foamlines flee:
  Life, love, and laziness are a trine
  Worshipful, wonderful, dear, divine. . . .
O to be somewhere by the sea!

ENVOY

  Out and alas for the sweet Lang Syne,
When I was rich in a certain key—
  The key of the fields; and I hadn't to pine,
  Or to sigh in vain at the sun's decline,
O to be somewhere by the Sea!

W. E. Henley

A BALLADE OF SPRING'S UNREST

Up in the woodland where Spring
Comes as a laggard, the breeze
Whispers the pines that the King,
Fallen, has yielded the keys
To his White Palace and flees
Northward o'er mountain and dale.
Speed then the hour that frees!
Ho, for the pack and the trail!

Northward my fancy takes wing,
Restless am I, ill at ease.
Pleasures the city can bring
Lose now their power to please.
Barren, all barren, are these,
Town life's a tedious tale;
That cup is drained to the lees—
Ho, for the pack and the trail!

Ho, for the morning I sling
Pack at my back, and with knees
Brushing a thoroughfare, fling
Into the green mysteries:
One with the birds and the bees,
One with the squirrel and quail,
Night, and the stream's melodies—
Ho, for the pack and the trail!

L'ENVOI

Pictures and music and teas,
Theaters—books even—stale.
Ho, for the smell of the trees!
Ho, for the pack and the trail!

Bert Leston Taylor

BALLADE OF FOG IN THE CAÑON

Banked in a serried drift beside the sea,
  Rolling, wind-harried, in a snowy spray,
Majestic and mysterious, swirling free,
  The ghostly flood is massing, cold and grey;
  Inland it marches, and, at close of day,
Pearl-white and opal, sunset-hued with rose,
  It storms the ridge, and then, in brave array,
The fog's dumb army up the cañon goes.

And now the forest whispers, tree to tree—
  Their grim defense is marshalled for the fray;
Pine, fir, and redwood, standing cap-à-pie,
  Down the long spurs and on the hill tops sway.
  And now the misty vanguards, wild and gay,
Ride down the breeze—and now their squadrons close,
  And, sweeping like an ocean on its prey,
The fog's dumb army up the cañon goes.

The trembling bushes cower in the lee,
  O'er the mad rout the ragged smoke-wreaths play,
And scurrying cloudlets desperately flee.
  On the low crests the waving banners stay,
  Now lost, now conquering, striving to delay
The riotous deluge—yet in vain oppose—
  Height after height is carried, and away
The fog's dumb army up the cañon goes.

ENVOY

All night the battle wages, weird and fey,
  And gallant woods dispute their phantom foes;
But, conquering, overwhelming with dismay,
  The fog's dumb army up the cañon goes.

Gelett Burgess

BALLADE OF THE PIPESMOKE CARRY

The Ancient Wood is white and still,
Over the pines the bleak wind blows,
Voiceless the brook and mute the rill,
Silence too where the river flows.
Still I catch the scent of the rose
And hear the white-throat's roundelay,
Footing the trail that Memory knows,
Over the hills and far away.

I have only a pipe to fill:
Weaving, wreathing rings disclose
A trail that flings straight up the hill,
Straight as an arrow's flight. For those
Who fare by night the pole star glows
Above the mountain top. By day
A blasted pine and pathway shows
Over the hills and far away.

The Ancient Wood is white and chill,
But what know I of wintry woes?
The Pipesmoke Trail is mine at will—
Naught may hinder and none oppose.
Such the power the pipe bestows,
When the wilderness calls I may
Tramping go, as I smoke and doze,
Over the hills and far away.

L'ENVOI

Deep in the canyons lie the snows:
They shall vanish if I but say—
If my fancy a-roving goes
Over the hills and far away.

Bert Leston Taylor

A BALLADE OF MIDSUMMER

The heat wave sweeps along the street,
  And torrid ripples mark its flow;
Successive billows follow fleet,
  And blister all things with their glow.
  No puff of air swings to and fro;
No gentle zephyr stirs the trees.
  O for the winds that o'er ocean blow!
O for a breath of the salt sea-breeze!

Along the shadeless ways you greet
  No damsel fair, no buckramed beau—
The solitude is ruled by heat—
  A sultry, sullen, scorching woe.
  The blazing sun rides high and slow,
As if with laziness to tease
  The melting, sweltering world below—
O for a breath of the salt sea-breeze!

The laggard steed with aching feet
  Must stagger on; for him is no
Surcease of labor; no retreat
  Before his stint is done. And so
  Must man still labour on, although
He hopeless longs to take his ease,
  Or to the ocean fain would go—
O for a breath of the salt sea-breeze!

ENVOI

Princes or peasants, friend and foe,
  No man may have all that he please;
Midsummer heat shall lay him low—
  O for a breath of the salt sea-breeze!

Brander Matthews

PRINCESS BALLADE *

Never a horn sounds in Sherwood to-night,
  Friar Tuck's drinking Olympian ale,
Little John's wandered away from our sight,
  Robin Hood's bow hangs unused on its nail.
  Even the moon has grown weary and pale
Sick for the glint of Maid Marian's hair,
  But there is one joy on mountain and dale,
Fairies abound all the time, everywhere!

Saints have attacked them with sacredest might,
  They could not shatter their gossamer mail;
Steam-driven engines can never affright
  Fairies who dance in their spark-sprinkled trail.
  Still for a warning the sad Banshees wail,
Still are the Leprechauns ready to bear
  Purses of gold to their captors for bail;
Fairies abound all the time, everywhere!

Oberon, King of the realms of delight,
  May your domain over us never fail.
Mab, as a rainbow-hued butterfly bright,
  Yours is the glory that age cannot stale.
  When we are planted down under the shale,
Fairy-folk, drop a few daffodils there,
  Comfort our souls in the Stygian vale;
Fairies abound all the time, everywhere.

L'ENVOI

White Flower Princess, though sophisters rail,
  Let us be glad in the faith that we share.
None shall the Good People safely assail;
  Fairies abound all the time, everywhere!

Joyce Kilmer

* From *Poems, Essays and Letters* by Joyce Kilmer. Copyright 1914, George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

BALLADE OF AUGUST

Now, when the street-pent airs blow stale
  A longing stirs us as of yore
To take the old Odyssian trail,
  To bend upon the trireme's oar
  For isléd stream and hill-bound shore;
To lay aside the dirty pen
  For summer's blue and golden store
'Neath other skies, 'mid stranger men!

Then let the rover's call prevail
  That opes for us the enchanted door,
That bids us spread the silken sail
  For bays o'er which the seabirds soar,
  And foam-flecked rollers pitch and roar,
Where nymph maybe, and mermaiden,
  Come beachward in the moon-rise hoar,
'Neath other skies, 'mid stranger men!

Blue-eyed Calypsos, Circes pale
  (The sage who shuns them I abhor),
These—for a fortnight—shall not fail
  To thrill the heart's susceptive core,
  To bind us with their ancient lore,
Who rather like to listen when
  Sweet-lipped the sirens voice their score,
'Neath other skies, 'mid stranger men!

ENVOY

Masters, who seek the minted ore,
  It's only August now and then,
Ah, take the Wanderer's way once more,
  'Neath other skies, 'mid stranger men!

Patrick R. Chalmers

A BALLADE OF MIDSUMMER

The rose still blooms within the clipt parterre,
  A boon to lovers; still the south winds sigh;
There is a sense of languor in the air;
  Each hour that passes seems too sweet to die.
  Low croons the cuckoo where the orchards lie
Aswoon in dreams from morn to mellow morn;
  The wheat is golden 'neath a gold-blue sky,
And hopes of harvest kindle in the corn.

The thrush at twilight weaves a silver snare
  Of song that quavers till the moon is high;
There is an Orient attar everywhere;
  Each hour that passes seems too sweet to die,
  The shrill cicada sounds its sudden cry
In the hot bush, then leaves the silence lorn;
  An amber ripple runs along the rye,
While hopes of harvest kindle in the corn.

The mountains call us, stair on stately stair;
  The glades invite us; we are fain to fly,
Leaving behind the thralling bonds of care,—
  (Each hour that passes seems too sweet to die.)
  Forgetful of the web of ashen ply,
To toil whereat were weary mortals born,
  Grasping the meed the darker days deny
Now hopes of harvest kindle in the corn.

ENVOY

Love, let us share its glamour, you and I,
Each passing hour that seems too sweet to die!
Life is at floodtide, of no glory shorn,
When hopes of harvest kindle in the corn.

Clinton Scollard

BALLADE OF THE FOREST IN SUMMER

Fra Cruachan tae Aberdeen
  The hinds'll move their calfies soon
Up frae the bracken's bonnie green
  To yon blue heights that float aboon;
Nae snaws the tops an' corries croon;
  Crags whaur the eagle lifts his kills
Blink i' the gowden efternoon;
  It's summer noo in a' the hills!

The heather sleeps frae morn till e'en
  Braw in her reed-an'-purple goon;
Sax weeks it wants or stags be clean
  An' gang wi thickenin' manes an' broun
Waitin' the cauld October moon
  When a' the roarin' brae-face fills—
Ye've heard yon wild, wanchancy tune?
  It's summer noo in a' the hills!

Yet blaws a soupin' breeze an' keen;
  We're wearit for it whiles in toun,
An' I wad be whaur I hae been
  In Autumn's blast or heats o' June
Up on the quiet forest groun',
  Friens wi' the sun, or shoor that chills,
Watchin' the beasts gang up an' doon;
  It's summer noo in a' the hills!

ENVOY

Mountains o' deer, ye ca' a loon
  Fra streets an' sic-like stoury ills
Wi' thankfu' heart an' easy shoon;
  It's summer noo in a' the hills!

Patrick R. Chalmers

BALLADE OF THE THINGS THAT REMAIN

The loveliness of water, its faery ways
  With cloud and wind, its myriad sorceries
With morning and the moon, and stars agaze
  In its still glass, and the tranced summer trees;
  The vowelled rivers, the rough-throated seas,
The tides that brim with silver the grassy plain,
  Or strew lone islands with lost argosies:
We come and go—these things remain.

Fire and its gnomes, soft-talking as it plays,
  Dream-like, amid its fretted imageries,
Or melting the wild hills, and with its blaze
  Licking the very stars; and, even as these,
  The winds that blow through all the centuries,
The falling snow, the shining April rain,
  Birds singing, and the far-off Pleiades:
We come and go—these things remain.

God's glory, and the march of nights and days,
  The seals upon the ancient mysteries
Of rose and star and woman's magic face,
  That, seeing, man loves, yet knows not what he sees;
  The old sweet sins, the old sweet sanctuaries;
War and long peace, then war and peace again;
  The Dark and in Death's hands the dreadful keys:
We come and go—these things remain.

ENVOI

Prince, save ourselves, there is but little flees
  That comes not back, even as this refrain;
'Faith, 'tis a thought that doth me greatly please:
  We come and go—these things remain.

Richard Le Gallienne

ALONE IN ARCADY

Love, harken how the boughs o'erhead
  Their lute-like notes are murmuring!
It is as though the year had spread
  About us an eternal spring;
  Joy breathes from every living thing;
The air is sweet with harmony;
  Linnet and lark their ardors fling;—
We are alone in Arcady.

Love, there's an Orient attar shed
  From blooms that climb and blooms that cling,
Fragrance to subtle fragrance wed
  To us the vagrant breezes bring;
  Roses have lost their thorns to sting;
The lilies gleam like ivory;
  Each violet—ah, the marveling!
We are alone in Arcady!

Love, streams by lyric raptures led
  Through reedy coverts slip and sing,
As when of yore Adonis bled,
  Or Orpheus touched the plaintive string
  Upon his weary wandering
In search of pale Persephone;
  Time seems to fold his hastening wing;—
We are alone in Arcady!

ENVOY

Love, whatsoever path we tread,
  If side by side our ways may be,
Then of a sooth it may be said,—
  "We are alone in Arcady!"

Clinton Scollard

BALLADE OF BROKEN FLUTES*

(To A. T. Schumann)

In dreams I crossed a barren land,
  A land of ruin, far away;
Around me hung on every hand
  A deathful stillness of decay;
  And silent, as in bleak dismay
That song should thus forsaken be,
  On that forgotten ground there lay
The broken flutes of Arcady.

The forest that was all so grand
  When pipes and tabors had their sway
Stood leafless now, a ghostly band
  Of skeletons in cold array.
  A lonely surge of ancient spray
Told of an unforgetful sea,
  But iron blows had hushed for aye
The broken flutes of Arcady.

No more by summer breezes fanned,
  The place was desolate and gray;
But still my dream was to command
  New life into that shrunken clay.
  I tried it. And you scan to-day,
With uncommiserating glee,
  The songs of one who strove to play
The broken flutes of Arcady.

ENVOY

So, Rock, I join the common fray,
  To fight where Mammon may decree;
And leave, to crumble as they may,
  The broken flutes of Arcady.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

BALLADE OF SOLITUDE

Thank Heaven, in these despondent days,
  I have at least one faithful friend,
Who meekly listens to my lays,
  As o'er the darkened downs we wend.
  Nay, naught of mine may him offend;
In sooth he is a courteous wight,
  His constancy needs no amend—
My shadow on a moonlight night.

Too proud to give me perjured praise,
  He hearkens as we onward tend,
And ne'er disputes a doubtful phrase,
  Nor says he cannot comprehend.
  Might God such critics always send!
He turns not to the left or right,
  But patient follows to the end—
My shadow on a moonlight night.

And if the public grant me bays,
  On him no jealousies descend;
But through the midnight woodland ways,
  He velvet-footed will attend;
  Or where the chalk cliffs downward bend
To meet the sea all silver-bright,
  There will he come, most reverend—
My shadow on a moonlight night.

ENVOY

O wise companion, I commend
  Your grace in being silent quite;
And envy with approval blend—
  My shadow on a moonlight night.

William Black

ASPHODEL

Now who will thread the winding way,
  Afar from fervid summer heat,
Beyond the sunshafts of the day,
  Beyond the blast of winter sleet?
  In the green twilight, dimly sweet,
Of poplar shades the shadows dwell,
  Who found erewhile a fair retreat
Along the mead of Asphodel.

There death and birth are one, they say;
  Those lowlands bear no yellow wheat,
No sound doth rise of mortal fray,
  Of lowing herds, of flocks that bleat;
  Nor wind nor rain doth blow nor beat;
Nor shrieketh sword, nor tolleth bell;
  But lovers one another greet
Along the mead of Asphodel.

I would that there my soul might stray;
  I would my phantom, fair and fleet,
Might cleave the burden of the clay,
  Might leave the murmur of the street,
  Nor with half-hearted prayer entreat
The half-believed-in Gods; too well
  I know the name I shall repeat
Along the mead of Asphodel.

Queen Proserpine, at whose white feet
  In life my love I may not tell,
Wilt give me welcome when we meet
  Along the mead of Asphodel?

Graham R. Tomson

BALLADE OF DREAMS

"Captain, for what brave hire
  Sail'st thou upon this sea?"
"I have dreamt a dream of desire,
  And I seek no other fee.
Shores sweet with rosemary
  Down to blue waters grew—
. . . I dreamt: yet I say to thee
  Only our dreams are true.

"I see the gleam of a spire,
  The hint of a shadowed tree,
The glint of the sun, like fire,
  Where haply that land may be."
"In dreaming your youth may flee,
  Captain and vagrant crew."
"Good luck to our vagrancy!
  Only our dreams are true."

"The sea has a deadly ire,
  Her sorrows are ill to dree;
Does not thy sailing tire?
  What of thy Arcady?"
"I bear with adversity,
  Bear with the sea's great rue.
I have dreamt of a port . . . ay me!
  Only our dreams are true."

ENVOI

Sailors of all degree,
  This I do say to you—
Voyage on hopefully,
  Only our dreams are true.

Rose E. Macaulay

BALLADE BY THE FIRE *

Slowly I smoke and hug my knee,
  The while a witless masquerade
Of things that only children see
  Floats in a mist of light and shade:
  They pass, a flimsy cavalcade,
And with a weak, remindful glow,
  The falling embers break and fade,
As one by one the phantoms go.

Then, with a melancholy glee
  To think where once my fancy strayed,
I muse on what the years may be
  Whose coming tales are all unsaid,
  Till tongs and shovel, snugly laid
Within their shadowed niches, grow
  By grim degrees to pick and spade,
As one by one the phantoms go.

But then, what though the mystic Three
  Around me ply their merry trade?—
And Charon soon may carry me
  Across the gloomy Stygian glade?—
  Be up, my soul; nor be afraid
Of what some unborn year may show;
  But mind your human debts are paid,
As one by one the phantoms go.

ENVOY

Life is the game that must be played:
  This truth at least, good friends, we know;
So live and laugh, nor be dismayed
  As one by one the phantoms go.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

* From *The Children of the Night.* Copyright 1896-1897 by Edwin Arlington Robinson. Published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

BALLADE OF VAIN HOPES

O ghosts of Bygone Hours, that stand
  Upon the marge of yonder shore
Where by the pale feet-trampled sand
  (Though none is seen to walk that floor)
  The Stygian wave flows evermore:
We fain would buy what ye can tell,
  Speak! Speak! And thrill to each heart's core—
Vain Hopes are all we have to sell!

O spectral Hours that throng this land—
  Where no sweet floods of sunshine pour,
But vast, tenebriously grand,
  Dense glooms abide, wind-swept or frore—
  O ye who thus have gone before,
Break silence—break your charmëd spell!
  Heed not our negligence of yore!
Vain Hopes are all we have to sell!

O sombre, sad-eyed, shadowy band,
  Speak, speak, and wave not o'er and o'er
Each wan phantasmal shadow-hand;
  O say, if when with battling sore
  We cross the flood and hear the roar
O' the world like a sighed farewell,
  What waits beyond the Grave's last door?
Vain Hopes are all we have to sell!

ENVOY

O coming Hours, O unspent store,
  Your promise breathe—as in sea-shell
Imprison'd Echo sings her lore—
  Vain Hopes are all we have to sell!

William Sharp

"KING PANDION, HE IS DEAD"

"King Pandion, he is dead;
All thy friends are lapp'd in lead."
—*Shakespeare.*

Dreamers, drinkers, rebel youth,
Where's the folly free and fine
You and I mistook for truth?
Wits and wastrels, friends of wine,
Wags and poets, friends of mine,
Gleams and glamors all are fled,
Fires and frenzies half divine!
King Pandion, he is dead!

Time's unmannerly, uncouth!
Here's the crow's-foot for a sign!
And, upon our brows, forsooth,
Wits and wastrels, friends of wine,
Time hath set his mark malign;
Frost has touched us, heart and head,
Cooled the blood and dulled the eyne:
King Pandion, he is dead!

Time's a tyrant without ruth:—
Fancies used to bloom and twine
Round a common tavern booth,
Wits and wastrels, friends of wine,
In that youth of mine and thine!
'Tis for youth the feast is spread;
When we dine now—we but dine!—
King Pandion, he is dead!

How our dreams would glow and shine,
Wits and wastrels, friends of wine,
Ere the drab Hour came that said:
King Pandion, he is dead!

Don Marquis

BALLADE OF THE COGNOSCENTI

Out of the silence some one called my name—
  Straight to my side a wingèd message flew—
Out of the dark an unknown shadow came,
  And lo, we were revealed at last, and knew!
  Despite the chance of time and distance, grew
The union, that in mystery began;
  This was the sign, and in its hope we two
Make ready for the Brotherhood of Man.

So soul to soul does boldly kinship claim
  For them that know the master-word and clue;
So secret friendship kindles into flame,
  Fired by the spark that smoulders, out of view.
  Thus leaps the prophecy the sad world through—
Truth marches ever onward—in her van
  The Cognoscenti, leagued with purpose true,
Make ready for the Brotherhood of Man.

Who wove this human web upon the frame
  Of the round earth, and its great pattern drew,
To make the fabric of His glorious aim—
  He knows the warp and woof and every hue;
  He knows the strands of life, and how pursue,
Appearing, disappearing, by His plan,
  The threads that knit the souls illumined, who
Make ready for the Brotherhood of Man.

ENVOY

O Cognoscenti, by your light subdue
  The night of Ignorance, and Error's ban!
The Ages' Promise, ye, O blessed Few;
  Make ready for the Brotherhood of Man!

Gelett Burgess

"FROM BATTLE, MURDER AND SUDDEN DEATH, GOOD LORD, DELIVER US"

What of this prayer which myriad skies
  Hear from the shrines where tired men kneel,
Godward upturning anguished eyes,
  Clasping gaunt hands in strong appeal?
  What of this fear that worn lives feel?
Why should some strain their labouring breath,
  Since they must gain not woe but weal,
From battle, murder and sudden death!

Is it not well with him who dies
  Flushed amid smoke and flash of steel;
Stabbed by some traitor's swift surprise;
  Stricken by doom no signs reveal?
  Ruin and wrong can no more deal
Blows beneath which (man's record saith)
  Men ask deliverance, while they reel,
From battle, murder and sudden death!

Can one so dead be harmed by lies,
  Tortured by wounds smiles ill conceal?
Can love bring loss, or desire devise
  Vain visions, or grim fate's iron heel
  Brand both on brow and soul its seal,
Till, wretched as He of Nazareth,
  Man loathes the life he yet prays to steal
From battle, murder and sudden death?

ENVOI

Waifs that on life's tide sink and rise,
  Chaff that each chance wind winnoweth,
Why dread God's rest that comes, a prize
  From battle, murder and sudden death?

John Moran

THE MARSH OF ACHERON

Between the Midnight and the Morn,
  The under-world my soul espied;
I saw the shades of men outworn,
  The Heroes fallen in their pride;
  I saw the marsh-lands drear and wide,
And many a ghost that strayed thereon;
  "Still must I roam," a maiden sighed,
"The sunless marsh of Acheron."

"And is thy fate, thus hope-forlorn?"
  "Yea, even so," the shade replied,
"For one I wronged in life hath sworn
  In hatred ever to abide:
  The lover seeketh not the bride,
But aye, with me, his heart dreams on,
  Asleep in these cold mists that hide
The sunless marsh of Acheron.

"And still for me will Lacon mourn,
  And still my pardon be denied:
Ah, never shall I cross the bourne
  That Dead from Living doth divide.
  Yet I repent me not!" she cried,
"Nay—only that mine hour is gone;
  One memory hath glorified
The sunless marsh of Acheron."

Ah, Princess! when *thy* ghost shall glide
  Where never star nor sunlight shone
See thou she tarry not beside
  The sunless marsh of Acheron.

Graham R. Tomson

FOOT-NOTE FOR IDYLS

"Le Sicilien chantait—mais c'est, ma foy, bien drôle"
—*Théodore Passerat.*

'Mongst all immortals tardiest is their tread!
Dear and desired, they tread with dainty feet,
By whose dear advent all are comforted
'Mongst mortal men! Thus, thus, thy verses greet
The Coming Hours—those Hours that from the heat
And mirth and friendly girls of Sicily,
Unheeding, haled thee to hell's minstrels'-seat,
To edify austere Persephonê.

The living may forget; only the dead
Are hopeless! sang blithe Corydon, where beat
Bright waves upon bright sands, and overhead
Pines murmured benisons. Now is it sweet
To rhyme of this in thy less glad retreat,
THEOCRITUS, who badest that song be
Immortal? and dost thou find that song meet
To edify austere Persephonê?

Now all old hours and all old years are sped
What profits it with thee if men repeat
Or all or anything thy live lips said?
Thou hast forgot Bombyca's *ivory feet,*
The shrill cicalæ's chirp, the lambkins' bleat,
And Lacon's *honied song on Helykê.*
What profits thee the honied sound of it
To edify austere Persephonê?

Lord of glad songs, for us the winding-sheet,
For thee the funeral pyre—*built near the sea,*—
Bids singing cease, and songless lips compete
To edify austere Persephonê.

James Branch Cabell

BALLADE OF TRUISMS

Gold or silver every day,
Dies to grey.
There are knots in every skein.
Hours of work and hours of play
Fade away
Into one immense Inane.
Shadow and substance, chaff and grain,
Are as vain
As the foam or as the spray.
Life goes crooning, faint and fain,
One refrain—
"If it could be always May!"

Though the earth be green and gay,
Though, they say,
Man the cup of heaven may drain;
Though his little world to sway,
He display
Hoard on hoard of pith and brain,
Autumn brings a mist and rain
That constrain
Him and his to know decay,
Where undimmed the lights that wane
Would remain,
If it could be always May.

Yea, alas, must turn to *Nay*,
Flesh to clay.
Chance and Time are ever twain.
Men may scoff and men may pray,
But they pay
Every pleasure with a pain.
Life may soar and Fortune deign
To explain
Where her prizes hide and stay;
But we lack the lusty train
We should gain
If it could be always May.

ENVOY

Time the pedagogue his cane
Might retain,
But his charges all would stray
Truanting in every lane—
Jack with Jane!—
If it could be always May.

W. E. Henley

A BALLAD OF HEROES

O conquerors and heroes, say—
Great Kings and Captains tell me this,
Now that you rest beneath the clay
What profit lies in victories?
Do softer flower-roots twine and kiss
The whiter bones of Charlemain?
Our crownless heads sleep sweet as his,
Now all your victories are in vain.

All ye who fell that summer's day
When Athens lost Amphipolis,
Who blinded by the briny spray
Fell dead i' the sea at Salamis,
You captors of Thyreatis,
Who bear yourselves a heavier chain,
With your young brother, Bozzaris,
Now all your victories are in vain.

And never Roman armies may
Rouse Hannibal where now he is,
When Cæsar makes no king obey,
And fast asleep lies Lascaris;
Who fears the Goths or Khan-Yenghiz?
Not one of all the paynim train
Can taunt us with Nicopolis,
Now all your victories are in vain.

What reck you Spartan heroes, pray,
Of Arcady or Argolis?
When one barbarian boy to-day
Would fain be king of all of Greece.
Brave knights, you would not stir I wis,
Altho' the very Cross were ta'en;
Not Rome itself doth Cæsar miss,
Now all your victories are in vain.

ENVOY

O kings, bethink how little is
The good of battles or the gain—
Death conquers all things with his peace
Now all your victories are in vain.

A. Mary F. Robinson

A BALLAD OF HEROES

"Now all your victories are in vain."
A. Mary F. Robinson

Because you passed, and now are not,—
Because, in some remoter day,
Your sacred dust from doubtful spot
Was blown of ancient airs away,—
Because you perished,—must men say
Your deeds were naught, and so profane
Your lives with that cold burden? Nay,
The deeds you wrought are not in vain!

Though, it may be, above the plot
That hid your once imperial clay,
No greener than o'er men forgot
The unregarding grasses sway;—
Though there no sweeter is the lay
From careless bird,—though you remain
Without distinction of decay,—
The deeds you wrought are not in vain!

No. For while yet in tower or cot
  Your story stirs the pulses' play;
And men forget the sordid lot—
  The sordid care, of cities gray;—
  While yet, beset in homelier fray,
They learn from you the lesson plain
  That Life may go, so Honour stay,—
The deeds you wrought are not in vain!

ENVOY

Heroes of old! I humbly lay
  The laurel on your graves again;
Whatever men have done, men may,—
  The deeds you wrought are not in vain.

Austin Dobson

BALLADE OF THE JOURNEY'S END

Those far, fair lands our feet have trod—
  The journey that was never done—
The dreams that followed us golden shod—
  All mad adventure 'neath the sun.
Ships in the trough of a waste sea spun—
  The treasuries of outlawed Kings—
And the white walls of Babylon;
  Ah! woe is me for all these things!

Your staff and scrip are laid aside
  And all my golden minstrelsy;
We sail no more at the turn of the tide
  In a captured vessel out at sea.
Oh, fallen and sick and tired are we!
  Sleek sloth about us twines and clings;
And where is the sword that should set us free?—
  Ah! woe is me for all these things!

The street lamps in a dreary line
  Glow through the dusk with venomous eyes.
We stir the fire and pour the wine,
  For we have done with enterprise.

The anxious town about us lies;
  Another song the shrill wind sings
Than that which startled the morning skies—
  Ah! woe is me for all these things!

ENVOI

A sudden gust and a rattle of rain,
  And a thought which leaps in the heart and stings;
Draw the curtains close round the window pane!
  Ah! woe is me for all these things!

Lady Margaret Sackville

THE HOIDENS

"Au point du premier jour, dans l'enfance du tout."
—*Antoine Riczi.*

When the Morning broke before us
Came the wayward Three astraying,
Chattering in babbling chorus,
(Obloquies of Æther saying),—
Hoidens that, at pegtop playing,
Flung their Top where yet it whirls
Through the coil of clouds unstaying;
For the Fates are captious girls.

CLOTHO

Why, upon that Toy before us
Insects cluster! Hear them saying,
In the quaintest shrillest chorus:—
'Life affords no time for playing!
And for each that goes astraying,
Featly as a planet whirls
Drops the stroke of doom unstaying,
For the Fates are captious girls.'

LACHESIS

La, I thought it reeled before us
Tumbling, lurching, stumbling, straying,
In some sort of mumbling chorus!
Now I see them at their playing—
I too see,—and hear them saying:—
'Note with what fixed aim life whirls
Onward to set goals unstaying,
For the Fates are captious girls.'

ATROPOS

Sisters, I am tired of straying.
Catch the Toy while yet it whirls!
Cleanse the Toy, and end our playing!

—For the Fates are captious girls.

James Branch Cabell

BALLADE OF A GARDEN

With plash of the light oars swiftly plying,
  The sharp prow furrows the watery way;
The ripples' reach as the bank is dying,
  And soft shades slender, and long lights play
  In the still dead heat of the drowsy day,
As on I sweep with the stream that flows
  By sleeping lilies that lie astray
In the Garden of Grace whose name none knows.

There ever a whispering wind goes sighing,
  Filled with the scent of the new-mown hay,
Over the flower hedge peering and prying,
  Wooing the rose as with words that pray;
  And the waves from the broad bright river bay
Slide through clear channels to dream and doze,
  Or rise in a fountain's silver spray
In the Garden of Grace whose name none knows.

The sweet white rose with the red rose dying,
  Blooms where the summer follows the May,
Till the streams be hid by the lost leaves lying,
  That autumn shakes where the lilies lay.
  But now all bowers and beds are gay
And no rain ruffles the flower that blows,
  And still on the water soft dreams stay
In the Garden of Grace whose name none knows.

ENVOI

Before the blue of the sky grows grey
  And the frayed leaves fall from the faded rose,
Love's lips shall sing what the day-dreams say
  In the Garden of Grace whose name none knows.

Arthur Reed Ropes

A BALLAD OF DREAMLAND

I hid my heart in a nest of roses,
  Out of the sun's way, hidden apart;
In a softer bed than the soft white snow's is,
  Under the roses I hid my heart.
  Why would it sleep not? why should it start,
When never a leaf of the rose-tree stirred?
  What made sleep flutter his wings and part?
Only the song of a secret bird.

Lie still, I said, for the wind's wing closes,
  And mild leaves muffle the keen sun's dart;
Lie still, for the wind on the warm seas dozes,
  And the wind is unquieter yet than thou art.
  Does a thought in thee still as a thorn's wound smart?
Does the fang still fret thee of hope deferred?
  What bids the lips of thy sleep dispart?
Only the song of a secret bird.

The green land's name that a charm encloses,
  It never was writ in the traveller's chart,

And sweet on its trees as the fruit that grows is,
  It never was sold in the merchant's mart.
  The swallows of dreams through its dim fields dart,
And sleep's are the tunes in its tree-tops heard;
  No hound's note wakens the wildwood hart,
Only the song of a secret bird.

ENVOI

In the world of dreams I have chosen my part,
  To sleep for a season and hear no word
Of true love's truth or of light love's art,
  Only the song of a secret bird.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

BALLADE OF THE DREAMLAND ROSE *

Where the waves of burning cloud are rolled
  On the farther shore of the sunset sea,
In a land of wonder that none behold,
  There blooms a rose on the Dreamland Tree.
  It grows in the Garden of Mystery
Where the River of Slumber softly flows
  And whenever a dream has come to be
A petal falls from the Dreamland Rose.

In the heart of the tree, on a branch of gold,
  A silvern bird sings endlessly
A mystic song that is ages old,
  A mournful song in a minor key,
  Full of the glamour of faery;
And whenever a dreamer's ears unclose
  To the sound of that distant melody,
A petal falls from the Dreamland Rose.

Dreams and visions in hosts untold
  Throng around on the moonlit lea;
Dreams of age that are calm and cold,
  Dreams of youth that are fair and free,

Dark with a lone heart's agony,
Bright with a hope that no one knows—
And whenever a dream and a dream agree,
A petal falls from the Dreamland Rose.

L'ENVOI

Princess, you gaze in a reverie
Where the drowsy firelight redly glows;
Slowly you raise your eyes to me—
A petal falls from the Dreamland Rose.

Brian Hooker.

A BALLADE OF ROSES

Τὸ 'ρόδον τὸ τῶν ἐρώτων.

When Venus saw Ascanius sleep
On sweet Cythera's snow-white roses
His face like Adon's made her weep,
And long to kiss him where he dozes;
But fearing to disturb the boy,
She kissed the pallid blooms instead,
Which blushed and kept their blush for joy,
When Venus kissed white roses red.

Straight of these roses she did reap
Sufficient store of pleasant posies,
And coming from Cythera's steep
Where every fragrant flower that grows is,
She tossed them for the winds to toy
And frolic with till they were dead.
Heaven taught the earth a fair employ
When Venus kissed white roses red.

For each red rose the symbol deep
In its sad, happy heart encloses
Of kisses making love's heart leap,
And every summer wind that blows is

A prayer that ladies be not coy
  Of kisses ere brief life be sped.
There gleamed more gold in earth's alloy
  When Venus kissed white roses red.

ENVOY

All lovers true since windy Troy
  Flamed for a woman's golden head,
You gained surcease from life's annoy
  When Venus kissed white roses red.

Justin Huntley McCarthy

A BALLADE OF IRRESOLUTION

Isolde, in the story old,
When Ireland's coast the vessel nears,
And Death were fairer to behold,
To Tristan gives "the cup that clears."
Straight to their fate the helmsman steers:
Unknowing, each the potion sips. . . .
Comes echoing through the ghostly years
"Give me the philtre of thy lips!"

Ah, that like Tristan I were bold!
My soul into the future peers,
And passion flags, and heart grows cold,
And sicklied resolution veers.
I see the Sister of the Shears
Who sits fore'er and snips, and snips. . . .
Still falls upon my inward ears,
"Give me the philtre of thy lips!"

Hero of lovers, largely soul'd!
Imagination thee enspheres
With song-enchanted wood and wold
And casements fronting magic meres.
Tristan, thy large example cheers
The faint of heart; thy story grips!—
My soul again that echo hears,
"Give me the philtre of thy lips!"

L'ENVOI

Sweet sorceress, resolve my fears!
He stakes all who Elysium clips.
What tho' the fruit be tares and tears!—
Give me the philtre of thy lips!

Bert Leston Taylor

BALLADE OF MY LADY'S BEAUTY *

Squire Adam had two wives, they say,
  Two wives had he, for his delight;
He kissed and clypt them all the day,
  And clypt and kissed them all the night.
  Now Eve like ocean foam was white,
And Lillith, roses dipped in wine,
  But though they were a goodly sight
No lady is so fair as mine.

To Venus some folk tribute pay,
  And Queen of Beauty she is hight;
And Sainte Marie the world doth sway
  In cerule napery bedight.
  My wonderment these twain invite,
Their comeliness it is divine;
  And yet I say in their despite,
No lady is so fair as mine.

Dame Helen caused a grievous fray,
  For love of her brave men did fight;
The eyes of her made sages fey
  And put their hearts in woful plight;
  To her no rhymes will I indite,
For her no garlands will I twine,
  Though she be made of flowers and light,
No lady is so fair as mine.

* From *Poems, Essays and Letters by Joyce Kilmer.*

L'ENVOI

Prince Eros, Lord of lovely might,
  Who on Olympus dost recline,
Do I not tell the truth aright?
  No lady is so fair as mine.

Joyce Kilmer

THE FLIGHT OF NICOLETE

All bathed in pearl and amber light
  She rose to fling the lattice wide,
And leaned into the fragrant night,
  Where brown birds sang of summertide
  ('Twas Love's own voice that called and cried)
'Ah, Sweet!' she said, 'I'll seek thee yet,
  Though thorniest pathways should betide
The fair white feet of Nicolete.'

They slept, who would have stayed her flight
  (Full fain were they the maid had died!)
She dropped adown her prison's height
  On strands of linen featly tied.
  And so she passed the garden-side,
With loose-leaved roses sweetly set,
  And dainty daisies, dark beside
The fair white feet of Nicolete!

Her lover lay in evil plight
  (So many lovers yet abide!)
I would my tongue could praise aright
  Her name, that should be glorified.
  Those lovers now, whom foes divide,
A little weep,—and soon forget.
  How far from these faint lovers glide
The fair white feet of Nicolete.

My Princess, doff thy frozen pride,
  Nor scorn to pay Love's golden debt;

Through his dim woodland take for guide
The fair white feet of Nicolete.

Graham R. Tomson

'THE LOVES OF EVERY DAY' *

He thinks not deep who hears the strain
Of gentle-hearted Nicolette
And fears that nevermore again
To such a tune will love be set
Of daisies and the foot that let
Them look but shadows on the way
To where the olden lovers met;—
These are the loves of every day.

The heart that makes of binding chain
A linked song for Nicolette,
The heart that ventures perilous pain,
That needs no counsel, heeds no threat,
And hearts that hear and answer yet
The blessing of the holy ray
Of evening from her minaret,—
These are the loves of every day.

Not only shall the story gain
For Aucassin and Nicolette
Woods green with an immortal rain;
But long as human eyes go wet
For lovers, or till time forget
That we can love as well as they
In triumph over mortal fret,—
These are the loves of every day.

ENVOY

Poet, yours is a vain regret
That Aucassin has gone his way!
We have him still with Nicolette;—
These are the loves of every day.

Witter Bynner

* From *Young Harvard*, by Witter Bynner. Copyright by Alfred A. Knopf, Publisher.

A BALLADE OF OLD SWEETHEARTS

(To M. C.)

Who is it that weeps for the last year's flowers
  When the wood is aflame with the fires of spring,
And we hear her voice in the lilac bowers
  As she croons the runes of the blossoming?
  For the same old blooms do the new years bring.
But not to our lives do the years come so,
  New lips must kiss and new bosoms cling.—
Ah! lost are the loves of the long ago.

Ah! me, for a breath of those morning hours
  When Alice and I went awandering
Through the shining fields, and it still was ours
  To kiss and to feel we were shuddering—
  Ah! me, when a kiss was a holy thing.—
How sweet were a smile from Maud, and oh!
  With Phyllis once more to be whispering.—
Ah! lost are the loves of the long ago.

But it cannot be that old Time devours
  Such loves as was Annie's and mine we sing,
And surely beneficent heavenly powers
  Save Muriel's beauty from perishing;
  And if in some golden evening
To a quaint old garden I chance to go,
  Shall Marion no more by the wicket sing?—
Ah! lost are the loves of the long ago.

In these lives of ours do the new years bring
  Old loves as old flowers again to blow?
Or do new lips kiss and new bosoms cling?—
  Ah! lost are the loves of the long ago.

Richard Le Gallienne

A BALLADE OF CALYPSO

The loud black flight of the storm diverges
  Over a spot in the loud mouthed main,
Where, crowned with summer and sun, emerges
  An isle unbeaten of wind or rain.
  And here, of its sweet queen grown full fain,
By whose kisses the whole broad earth seems poor,
  Tarries the wave-worn prince, Troy's bane,
In the green Ogygian Isle secure.

To her voice our sweetest songs are dirges.
  She gives him all things, counting it gain.
Ringed with the rocks and ancient surges,
  How could Fate dissever these twain?
  But him no loves nor delights retain;
New knowledge, new lands, new loves allure;
  Forgotten the perils, and toils, and pain,
In the green Ogygian Isle secure.

So he spurns her kisses and gifts, and urges
  His weak skiff over the wind-vext plain,
Till the grey of the sky in the grey sea merges,
  And nights reel round, and waver and wane.
  He sits once more in his own domain.
No more the remote sea-walls immure.—
  But ah, for the love he shall clasp not again
In the green Ogygian Isle secure.

L'ENVOI

Princes, and ye whose delights remain,
  To the one good gift of the gods hold sure,
Lest ye, too, mourn, in vain, in vain,
  Your green Ogygian Isle secure.

Charles G. D. Roberts

BALLADE OF THE HANGING GARDENS OF BABYLON

The fierce queen wearied, and she smote her hands:
  "Summon my lord, the King," she spake and sighed,
"I sicken of these steaming shallow lands!"
  Nebuchadnezzar stood there by her side,
  Suppliant. She turned upon him, eagle-eyed;
"O King, would thou and Babylon ne'er had been!
  I die for pines and storms." "Amytis, bride,
There shall be hanging gardens for my queen."

"O for Assyria, where each mountain stands,
  With pine-trees to the peak, and the great stride
Of the north wind, voiced as a god's commands,
  Shakes forests into music far and wide,
  Iron and granite song; and horsemen ride
By foam of torrents, laughing, lances keen—
  But I mid ooze and baking bricks must bide. . . ."
"There shall be hanging gardens for my queen."

Night fell, and morning rose with crimson bands,
  About her couch the tiring maidens glide,
And one that wove her hair in shining strands
  Spake softly: "Vouch, great queen, to gaze outside,
  Beyond the curtains"—and Amytis cried,
And laughed and wept for what her eyes had seen—
  Assyria at her window magnified!—
"There shall be hanging gardens for my queen."

ENVOI

"Queen," spake the King, "is thy heart satisfied?
  Unnumbered slaves and Night have wrought this scene—
The rocks and pines of thy Assyrian pride:
  There shall be hanging gardens for my queen."

Richard Le Gallienne

THE BALLADE OF LOVELACE

My days for singing and loving are over
  And stark I lie in my narrow bed,
I care not at all if roses cover
  Or if above me the snow is spread;
  I am weary of dreaming of my sweet dead—
Vera and Lily and Annie and May,
And my soul is set on the present fray,
  Its piercing kisses and subtle snares;
So gallants are conquered, ah wellaway,
  My love was stronger and fiercer than theirs.

O happy moths that now flit and hover
  From the blossom of white to the blossom of red,
Take heed, for I was a lordly lover
  Till the little day of my life had sped;
  As straight as a pine tree, a golden head,
And eyes as blue as an austral bay.
Ladies, when loosing your satin array,
  Reflect, in my years had you lived, my prayers
Might have won you from weakly lovers away.
  My love was stronger and fiercer than theirs.

Through the song of the thrush and the pipe of the plover
  Sweet voices come down through the binding lead;
O queens that every age must discover
  For men, that Man's delight may be fed;
  Oh, sister queens to the queens I wed
For the space of a year, a month, a day,
No thirst but mine could your thirst allay;
  And oh, for an hour of life, my dears,
To kiss you, to laugh at your lovers' dismay,—
  My love was stronger and fiercer than theirs.

ENVOI

Prince was I ever of festival gay,
And time never silvered my locks with grey;

The love of your lovers is as hope that despairs,
So think of me sometimes, dear ladies, I pray,
My love was stronger and fiercer than theirs.

George Moore

BALLADE OF WOMEN I LOVE *

Prudence Mears hath an old blue plate
  Hid away in an oaken chest,
And a Franklin platter of ancient date
  Beareth Amandy Baker's crest;
What times soever I've been their guest,
  Says I to myself in an undertone:
"Of womenfolk, it must be confessed,
  These do I love, and these alone."

Well, again, in the Nutmeg State,
  Dorothy Pratt is richly blest
With a relic of art and a land effete—
  A pitcher of glass that's cut, not pressed.
And a Washington teapot is possessed
  Down in Pelham by Marthy Stone—
Think ye now that I say in jest
  "These do I love, and these alone"?

Were Hepsy Higgins inclined to mate,
  Or Dorcas Eastman prone to invest
In Cupid's bonds, they could find their fate
  In the bootless bard of Crockery Quest.
For they've heaps of trumpery—so have the rest
  Of those spinsters whose ware I'd like to own;
You can see why I say with such certain zest,
  "These do I love, and these alone."

ENVOY

Prince, show me the quickest way and best
  To gain the subject of my moan;
We've neither spinsters nor relics out West—
  These do I love, and these alone.

Eugene Field

BALLADE OF LADIES' NAMES

Brown's for Lalage, Jones for Lelia,
  Robinson's bosom for Beatrice glows,
Smith is a Hamlet before Ophelia.
  The glamour stays if the reason goes!
  Every lover the years disclose
Is of a beautiful name made free.
  One befriends, and all others are foes.
Anna's the name of names for me.

Sentiment hallows the vowels of Delia;
  Sweet simplicity breathes from Rose;
Courtly memories glitter in Celia;
  Rosalind savours of quips and hose,
  Araminta of wits and beaux,
Prue of puddings, and Coralie
  All of sawdust and spangled shows;
Anna's the name of names for me.

Fie upon Caroline, Madge, Amelia—
  These I reckon the essence of prose!—
Cavalier Katharine, cold Cornelia,
  Portia's masterful Roman nose,
  Maud's magnificence, Totty's toes,
Poll and Bet with their twang of the sea,
  Nell's impertinence, Pamela's woes!
Anna's the name of names for me.

ENVOY

Ruth like a gillyflower smells and blows,
  Sylvia prattles of Arcadee,
Sybil mystifies, Connie crows,
  Anna's the name of names for me!

W. E. Henley

BALLADE OF THE GIRTON GIRL

She has just "put her gown on" at Girton,
  She is learned in Latin and Greek,
But lawn tennis she plays with a skirt on
  That the prudish remark with a shriek.
In her accents, perhaps, she is weak
  (Ladies *are*, one observes with a sigh),
But in Algebra—*there* she's unique,
  But her forte's to evaluate π.

She can talk about putting a "spirt on"
  (I admit, an unmaidenly freak),
And she dearly delighteth to flirt on
  A punt in some shadowy creek;
Should her bark, by mischance, spring a leak,
  She can swim as a swallow can fly;
She can fence, she can put with a cleek,
  But her forte's to evaluate π.

She has lectured on Scopas and Myrton,
  Coins, vases, mosaics, the antique,
Old tiles with the secular dirt on,
  Old marbles with noses to seek.
And her Cobet she quotes by the week,
  And she's written on *κεν* and on *καὶ*,
And her service is swift and oblique,
  But her forte's to evaluate π.

ENVOY

Princess, like a rose is her cheek,
  And her eyes are as blue as the sky,
And I'd speak, had I courage to speak,
  But—her forte's to evaluate π.

Andrew Lang

AN AMERICAN GIRL

She's had a Vassar education,
  And points with pride to her degrees;
She's studied household decoration;
  She knows a dado from a frieze,
  And tells Corots from Boldonis;
A Jacquemart etching, or a Haden,
  A Whistler, too, perchance might please
A frank and free young Yankee maiden.

She does not care for meditation;
  Within her bonnet are no bees;
She has a gentle animation,
  She joins in singing simple glees.
  She tries no trills, no rivalries
With Lucca (now Baronin Raden),
  With Nilsson or with Gerster; she's
A frank and free young Yankee maiden.

I'm blessed above the whole creation,
  Far, far, above all other he's;
I ask you for congratulation
  On this the best of jubilees:
  I go with her across the seas
Unto what Poe would call an Aiden,—
  I hope no serpent's there to tease
A frank and free young Yankee maiden.

ENVOY

Princes, to you the western breeze
  Bears many a ship and heavy laden,
What is the best we send in these?
  A frank and free young Yankee maiden.

Brander Matthews

A BALLADE OF BRIDES

For brides who grace these passing days,
  The poets lyric garlands twine;
For them the twittering song of praise
  Resounds with many a fulsome line.
  And unproved worth, as half divine,
Is glorified in tinkling tunes.
  But worthier dames shall bless our wine—
We'll toast the brides of other Junes!

What though a thoughtless public pays
  Its homage at young Beauty's shrine,
And wreathes smooth brows with orange sprays,
  With roses and with eglantine,
  Youth's cheeks that glow and eyes that shine
Are not the most enduring boons.
  O! we who've seen such things decline,
We'll toast the brides of other Junes!

Though flowery wreaths and poets' lays
  To grace the new-made bride combine,
O! let us rather twine the bays
  For tried and true ones, thine and mine,
  Who share whate'er the fates design
To bless or blight our nights and noons;
  Good comrades still through rain or shine—
We'll toast the brides of other Junes!

L'ENVOI

Old Friend! whose bride of Auld Lang Syne
  Still fills thy life with honeymoons,
Thy glass to mine, my glass to thine—
  We'll toast the brides of other Junes!

Thomas A. Daly

BALLADE OF A BACKSLIDER

Darling, I am growing old!
  Yet, before I pass away,
Shall these dimming eyes behold
  Woman hold her equal sway;
  I have labored for it—yea,
I have racked this bulging dome
  To confute the men who say
"Woman's place is in the Home."

Darling, I am growing cold
  Toward the suffrage hip-hooray;
Silver threads among the gold
  Seem my fervor to allay.
  Just as dawns the longed-for day,
Clear from Jacksonville to Nome,
  I am moved to murmur, "Nay,
Woman's place *is* in the Home!"

Darling, I am growing bold
  As my hair is growing gray!
You may sneer, or you may scold,
  But I fear no female fray!
  When the ladies got too gay
In the days of ancient Rome,
  Then began Rome's swift decay—
Woman's place is in the Home.

(Princess, privately I pray
  You'll excuse this little pome;
Just in public, let me bray—
  "Woman's Place is in the Home!")

Edwin Meade Robinson

BALLADE TO THE WOMEN

The poets, extolling the graces
  Of sweet femininity, pay
Particular court, in most cases,
  To Phyllis or Phœbe or Fay.
  "A toast to the ladies!" they say—
As "ladies" they always address them—
  And bid us bow down to them. Nay!
We sing the plain "women," God bless them!

Though light-o'-loves, frail as the laces,
  And satins in which they array
The charms of their forms and their faces,
  Are "ladies" for their little day,
  The feet of such idols are clay.
Our wives, when we come to possess them,
  Must loom to us larger than they.
We sing the plain "women," God bless them!

Sweet creatures who make the home-places
  As cheerful and bright as they may,
Whose feminine beauty embraces
  A heart to illumine the way,
  Though skies may be ever so gray;
Good mothers, whose children caress them
  And hail them as chums at their play—
We sing the plain "women," God bless them!

ENVOY

O! Queen, teach the "ladies," we pray,
  Whenever vain notions oppress them,
Though idly their charms we survey,
  We sing the plain "women," God bless them!

Thomas A. Daly

BALLADE OF THE LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT

The furrow's long behind my plow—
  My field is strewn with stones of care,
And trouble gathers thick enow
  As years add silver to my hair.
  Could I an easier path prepare
For baby feet that start to mount?—
  Save them a bit of wear and tear,—
And show the little things that count?

I see a tiny maiden bow
  O'er slate and pencil, in her chair:
A little pucker on her brow,
  A little tousle in her hair.
  And one wee tear has fallen where
The crooked figures grin and flount;
  My heart goes reaching to her there—
I love the little things that count!

Arithmetic is such a slough—
  A pilgrim's swamp of dull despair,
But Discipline will not allow
  My hand to point a thoro'fare.
  Harsh figures face us everywhere,
O'erwhelming in their vast amount;
  Must she so soon their burden bear?—
I love the little things that count!

Stern Teacher, must she ever fare
  Alone to Learning's chilly fount?
There is so much I long to share—
  I *love* the Little Things That Count!

Burges Johnson

A BALLADE OF EVOLUTION

In the mud of the Cambrian main
  Did our earliest ancestor dive:
From a shapeless albuminous grain
  We mortals our being derive.
  He could split himself up into five,
Or roll himself round like a ball;
  For the fittest will always survive,
While the weakliest go to the wall.

As an active ascidian again
  Fresh forms he began to contrive,
Till he grew to a fish with a brain,
  And brought forth a mammal alive.
  With his rivals he next had to strive,
To woo him a mate and a thrall;
  So the handsomest managed to wive
While the ugliest went to the wall.

At length as an ape he was fain
  The nuts of the forest to rive;
Till he took to the low-lying plain,
  And proceeded his fellow to knive.
  Thus did cannibal men first arrive,
One another to swallow and maul;
  And the strongest continued to thrive,
While the weakliest went to the wall.

ENVOY

Prince, in our civilised hive
  Now money's the measure of all;
And the wealthy in coaches can drive
  While the needier go to the wall.

Grant Allen

BALLADE OF PRIMITIVE MAN *

(To J. A. Farrer)

He lived in a cave by the seas,
  He lived upon oysters and foes,
But his list of forbidden degrees
  An extensive morality shows;
  Geological evidence goes
To prove he had never a pan,
  But he shaved with a shell when he chose,
'Twas the manner of Primitive Man!

He worshipp'd the rain and the breeze,
  He worshipped the river that flows,
And the Dawn, and the Moon, and the trees,
  And bogies, and serpents, and crows;
  He buried his dead with their toes
Tucked up, an original plan,
  Till their knees came right under their nose,
'Twas the manner of Primitive Man!

His communal wives, at his ease,
  He would curb with occasional blows;
Or his State had a queen, like the bees
  (As another philosopher trows):
  When he spoke, it was never in prose,
But he sang in a strain that would scan,
  For (to doubt it, perchance, were morose)
'Twas the manner of Primitive Man!

ENVOY

  Max, proudly your Aryans pose,
But their rigs they undoubtedly ran,
  For, as every Darwinian knows,
'Twas the manner of Primitive Man!

Andrew Lang

* From *Ballades and Verses Vain* by Andrew Lang. Copyright 1884, by Charles Scribner's Sons, Publishers.

BALLADE OF CAUTION

You that climb the trails of air
  Far above the ranges dim
Toward the starry pastures, where,
  Wonder-eyed, the cherubim
  Watch your sunlit chariot swim,
Tracing spirals involute
  Clear to Heaven's crystal rim—
Don't forget the parachute!

Icarus, the books declare,
  Full of youthful fire and vim,
Soared too high with little care;
  Down he fell, the stripling slim.
  Blue Ægean's azure brim
Hides his beauty, cold and mute.
  Shun the fate that conquered him—
Don't forget the parachute!

Oh, the vaunting souls that dare
  Heights to daunt the seraphim!
Oh, their fall to black Despair!
  Oh, the issue, bleak and grim!
  Though your wings be staunch and trim,
Strong your heart for high pursuit,
  Still, for love of life and limb,
Don't forget the parachute!

ENVOI

Prince (a time-worn pseudonym
  Dear to bards of good repute),
Be your flight of zeal or whim,
  Don't forget the parachute!

Arthur Guiterman

STORY OF THE FLOWERY KINGDOM

Fair Sou-Chong-Tee, by a shimmering brook
Where ghost-like lilies loomed tall and straight,
Met young Too-Hi, in a moonlit nook,
Where they cooed and kissed till the hour was late:
Then, with lanterns, a mandarin passed in state,
Named Hoo-Hung-Hoo of the Golden Band,
Who had wooed the maiden to be *his* mate—
For these things occur in the Flowery Land.

Now, Hoo-Hung-Hoo had written a book,
In seven volumes to celebrate
The death of the Emperor's thirteenth cook:
So, being a person whose power was great,
He ordered a Herald to indicate
He would blind Too-Hi with a red-hot brand
And marry Sou-Chong at a quarter-past eight,—
For these things occur in the Flowery Land.

And the brand was hot, and the lovers shook
In their several shoes, when by lucky fate
A Dragon came, with his tail in a crook, —
A Dragon out of a Nankeen Plate,—
And gobbled the hard-hearted potentate
And all of his servants, and snorted, *and*
Passed on at a super-cyclonic rate,—
For these things occur in the Flowery Land.

The lovers were wed at an early date,
And lived for the future, I understand,
In one continuous tête à tête,—
For these things occur . . . in the Flowery Land.

James Branch Cabell

BALLAD: BEFORE MY BOOKSHELVES

Now that the swallow again we see,
  Now daisy-burthened is every mead
And burthened the air with bird-minstrelsy—
  What book shall I take in my nook to read?
  Will a huge folio serve my need
From yonder musty and slumberous row?
  All the May-morn on *him* shall I feed—
Or the rose-bright tales of Boccaccio?

Stay! if I took him, asleep should I be
  In a moment, and even the birds would speed
To their nests, quick-stinting their melody
  As though, all-timeless, dark night were freed.
  Pass on! Yon history! Do you plead
For a hearing? Mighty of voice, I trow!
  Shall I thrive on some old-world blood-bright deed,
Or the rose-bright tales of Boccaccio?

The sweet heaven-showers for the daisied lea
  Are better than showers from heroes that bleed;
And the shriek of the clarion would slay the glee
  Of the birds that love but the shepherd's reed—
  Ah! and the lute of the singer! Have heed!
Here are the poets, with leaves that glow
  Lovelier than lindens': take this, indeed?—
Or the rose-bright tales of Boccaccio!

ENVOI

Birds, I am coming. Do you proceed
  With your lyrics; a lovelier song I know.
Look, here is a *Swinburne*, and here—base greed!
  Are *the rose-bright tales of Boccaccio!*

Nelson Rich Tyerman

WITH FITZGERALD'S "OMAR KHAYYAM"

Eight centuries unheeded by the West!
  Now loved within our hearts; whose daily strait
Is still to war with wavering unrest,
  To ask in vain, for aye importunate,
  The ceaseless "WHY?" whereof we ever wait
The answering "BECAUSE," which ringing true
  Would solve the mystery of Life and Fate.
Omar! the peace you sought we find in you.

The fabled Paradise wherein the blest
  Lie lotus-eating, lulled in languorous state,
Measured by later reasonable test
  Seems but at best a doubtful opiate.
  Life is but labour, always to create
New aims to strive for, and new things to do.
  Could Heaven itself the stress of life abate?
Omar! the peace you sought we find in you.

Incurious, we cease the hopeless quest,
  For nobler he who thus can subjugate
His reckless will, than he with fears opprest,
  Who cries amid his doubts, "Alláh is great!"
  "*Each his own heaven or hell!*" why hesitate?
To-day is ours, to-morrow keeps the clue
  To the great secret, still inviolate.
Omar! the peace you sought we find in you.

Shall Fate or we cry to Life's game, "check-mate"!
  Nay, wise men draw it, fools defeat pursue;
Unconquered, though unconquering, as we wait.
  Omar! the peace you sought we find in you.

Gleeson White

BALLADE OF THE *CAXTON HEAD*

News! Good News! at the old year's end:
  Lovers of learning, come buy, come buy!
Now to old Holborn let bookmen wend,
  Though the town be grimy, and grim the sky.
News! Good News! is our Christmas cry;
  For our feast of reason is richly spread,
And hungry bookmen may turn and try
  The famous *Sign* of the *Caxton Head*.

Let moralists talk of the lifelong friend;
  But books are the safest of friends, say I!
The best of good fellows will oft offend;
  But books can never do wrong: for why?
To their lover's ear, and their lover's eye,
  They are ever the same as in dear years fled;
And the choicest haunt, till you bid them fly,
  The famous *Sign* of the *Caxton Head*.

In one true fellowship see them blend!
  The delicate pages of Italy;
Foulis and Baskerville, bad to lend;
  And the strong black letter of Germany:
Here rare French wonders of beauty lie,
  Wrought by the daintiest of hands long dead:
All these are waiting, till you draw nigh
  The famous *Sign* of the *Caxton Head*.

L'ENVOI

Bookmen! whose pleasures can never die,
  While books are written, and books are read:
For the honour of Caxton, pass not by
  The famous *Sign* of the *Caxton Head*.

Lionel Johnson

BALLADE OF THE UNATTAINABLE

The Books I cannot hope to buy,
Their phantoms round me waltz and wheel,
They pass before the dreaming eye,
Ere Sleep the dreaming eye can seal.
A kind of literary reel
They dance; but fair the bindings shine.
Prose cannot tell them what I feel,—
The Books that never can be mine!

There frisk Editions rare and shy,
Morocco clad from head to heel;
Shakspearian quartos; Comedy
As first she flashed from Richard Steele;
And quaint Defoe on Mrs. Veal;
And, lord of landing net and line,
Old Izaak with his fishing creel,—
The Books that never can be mine!

Incunables! for you I sigh,
Black letter, at thy founts I kneel,
Old tales of Perrault's nursery,
For you I'd go without a meal!
For Books wherein did Aldus deal
And rare Galiot du Pré I pine.
The watches of the night reveal
The Books that never can be mine!

ENVOY

Prince, hear a hopeless Bard's appeal;
Reverse the rules of Mine and Thine;
Make it legitimate to steal
The Books that never can be mine!

Andrew Lang

BALLADE OF BOOKS UNBOUGHT

Some of the books that I would prize
  I'll buy (within ten years or so)–
J. Conrad's "Under Western Eyes,"
  A good Montaigne (by Florio).
  Old tomes like Holinshed or Stowe
Would gloriously ballast me,
  And when financial conduits flow,
Gissing's "By the Ionian Sea."

John Morley's book "On Compromise,"
  A decent set of E. A. Poe;
Bacon, perhaps, to make me wise;
  And Sanborn's Life of Hank Thoreau.
  Most of the works of Neil Munro,
That history by Wells (H. G.)
  And (nicest title that I know)
Gissing's "By the Ionian Sea."

I'm sure my mind will fertilize
  When I have bought some more Defoe;
And every time they advertise
  That Merrick set, my passions grow.
  And "Far Away and Long Ago"
And "Goosequill Papers" (L. I. G.)*
  Will stand upon this shelf, below
Gissing's "By the Ionian Sea."

ENVOY

Booksellers! I soliloquize
  No merely idle rhapsody—
Some day you'll see a man who buys
  Gissing's "By the Ionian Sea."

Christopher Morley

* Louise Imogen Guiney.

BALLADE OF THE TEMPTING BOOK

Sometimes when I sit down at night
  And try to think of something new,
Some odd conceit that I may write
  And work into a verse or two,
  There often dawns upon my view,
  The while my feeble thoughts I nurse,
A little book in gold and blue—
  "The Oxford Book of English Verse."

And though I try, in wild affright
  At thought of all I have to do,
To keep that volume out of sight,
  If I so much as look askew
  I catch it playing peek-a-boo.
  Then work may go to—pot, or worse!
I'm giving up the evening to
  "The Oxford Book of English Verse."

O! some for essays recondite,
  And some for frothy fiction sue,
But give to me for my delight
  One tuneful tome to ramble through;
  To hear the first quaint "Sing Cuccu!"
  And all those noble songs rehearse
Whose deathless melodies imbue
  "The Oxford Book of English Verse."

L'ENVOI

Kind Reader, here's a tip for you:
  Go buy, though skinny be your purse
And other books of yours be few,
  "The Oxford Book of English Verse."

Thomas A. Daly

A BALLADE OF A BOOK-REVIEWER

I have not read a rotten page
Of "Sex-Hate" or "The Social Test,"
And here comes "Husks" and "Heritage" . . .
O Moses, give us all a rest!
"Ethics of Empire"! . . . I protest
I will not even cut the strings,
I'll read "Jack Redskin on the Quest"
And feed my brain with better things.

Somebody wants a Wiser Age
(He also wants me to invest);
Somebody likes the Finnish Stage
Because the Jesters do not jest;
And grey with dust is Dante's crest,
The bell of Rabelais soundless swings;
And the winds come out of the west
And feed my brain with better things.

Lord of our laughter and our rage,
Look on us with our sins oppressed!
I, too, have trodden mine heritage,
Wickedly wearying of the best.
Burn from my brain and from my breast
Sloth, and the cowardice that clings,
And stiffness and the soul's arrest:
And feed my brain with better things.

ENVOI

Prince, you are host and I am guest,
Therefore I shrink from cavillings . . .
But I should have that fizz suppressed
And feed my brain with better things.

G. K. Chesterton

THE BALLAD OF IMITATION

"C'est imiter quelqu'un que de planter des choux."
—*Alfred de Musset.*

If they hint, O Musician, the piece that you played
  Is nought but a copy of Chopin or Spohr;
That the ballad you sing is but merely "conveyed"
  From the stock of the Arnes and the Purcells of yore;
  That there's nothing, in short, in the words or the score,
That is not as out-worn as the "Wandering Jew,"
  Make answer—Beethoven could scarcely do more—
That the man who plants cabbages imitates, too!

If they tell you, Sir Artist, your light and your shade
  Are simply "adapted" from other men's lore;
That—plainly to speak of a "spade" as a "spade"—
  You've "stolen" your grouping from three or from four;
  That (however the writer the truth may deplore),
'Twas Gainsborough painted *your* "Little Boy Blue";
  Smile only serenely—though cut to the core—
For the man who plants cabbages imitates, too!

And you too, my Poet, be never dismayed
  If they whisper your Epic—"Sir Eperon d'Or"—
Is nothing but Tennyson thinly arrayed
  In a tissue that's taken from Morris's store;
  That no one, in fact, but a child could ignore
That you "lift" or "accommodate" all that you do;
  Take heart—though your Pegasus' withers be sore—
For the man who plants cabbages imitates, too!

Postcriptum.—And you, whom we all so adore,
  Dear Critics, whose verdicts are always so new!—
One word in your ear. There were Critics before.
  And the man who plants cabbages imitates, too!

Austin Dobson

THE BALLADE OF ADAPTATION

The native drama's sick and dying,
  So say the cynic critic crew:
The native dramatist is crying—
  "Bring me the paste! Bring me the glue!
  Bring me the pen, and scissors, too!
Bring me the works of E. Augier!
  Bring me the works of V. Sardou!
I am the man to write a play!"

For want of plays the stage is sighing,
  Such is the song the wide world through:
The native dramatist is crying—
  "Behold the comedies I brew!
  Behold my dramas not a few!
On German farces I can prey,
  And English novels I can hew:
I am the man to write a play!"

There is, indeed, no use denying
  That fashion's turned from old to new:
The native dramatist is crying—
"Molière, good-bye! Shakespeare, adieu!
  I do not think so much of you.
Although not bad, you've had your day,
  And for the present you won't do.
I am the man to write a play!"

ENVOI

Prince of the stage, don't miss the cue,
  A native dramatist, I say
To every cynic critic, "Pooh!
  I am the man to write a play!"

Brander Matthews

A VERY WOFUL BALLADE OF THE ART CRITIC

(To E. A. Abbey)

A spirit came to my sad bed,
And weary sad that night was I,
Who'd tottered, since the dawn was red,
Through miles of Grosvenor Gallery,
Yea, leagues of long Academy
Awaited me when morn grew white,
'Twas then the Spirit whispered nigh,
"Take up the pen, my friend, and write!

"Of many a portrait grey as lead,
Of many a mustard-coloured sky,
Say much, where little should be said,
Lay on thy censure dexterously,
With microscopic glances pry
At textures, Tadema's delight,
Praise foreign swells, they always cry,
Take up the pen, my friend, and write!"

I answered, " 'Tis for daily bread,
A sorry crust, I ween, and dry,
That still, with aching feet and head,
I push this lawful industry,
'Mid pictures hung or low, or high,
But, touching that which I indite,
Do artists hold me lovingly?
Take up the pen, my friend, and write."

The Spirit writeth in form of

ENVOY

"They fain would black thy dexter eye,
They hate thee with a bitter spite,
But scribble since thou must, or die,
Take up the pen, my friend, and write!"

Andrew Lang

THE BALLADE OF FACT AND FICTION

I.

When in the parlor car we speed
  And rattle over hill and dale,
We do not greatly care to read,
  And turn away aghast and pale
  From the wares the newsboy has for sale,
Until, by some chance scene perplexed,
  We turn the page and find—without fail—
(To Be Continued in Our Next.)

II.

Although we wish to know, indeed,
  If the Scout discovers Big Knife's trail;
If the Pirate's well-laid plots succeed;
  If the Cabin-boy harpoons that whale;
  If the Maid is forced to take the veil;
If the Villain's from his purpose flexed,
  And if the Burglar breaks his jail—
(To Be Continued in Our Next.)

III.

Young men and maidens, we must take heed,
  When Cupid lets us out on bail;
Nor shall our fancy, lightly freed,
  Prevent our kneeling at the rail
  Where priests confirm the fetters frail,
And "Love each other" take for text:
  In Marriage is Courtship—somewhat stale—
To be continued in our next.

ENVOY

Oh, moralists, whose plaints exhale,
  By problems of existence vexed,
Remember, Life is but a tale
  To be continued in our next.

Brander Matthews

BALLADE OF DIME NOVELS

Gone are the tales that once we read!
  And none that come within our ken
May equal those that filled the head
  Of many a worthy citizen
  Who thrilled with boyish rapture, when,
In retribution stern and just,
  "The deadly rifle spoke,—and then
Another redskin bit the dust."

We had no malice, not a shred;
  For which of us would hurt a wren?
Not blood, but ink was what we shed;
  And yet, we bore ourselves like men!
  With Buckhorn Bill and Bigfoot Ben
In clutch of steel we put our trust,
  Until, deprived of oxygen,
Another redskin bit the dust.

On moccasins with silent tread
  We tracked our foes through marsh and fen.
We rescued maidens sore bestead
  From savage thrall and outlaw's den.
  We feared no odds of one to ten,
Nor hatchet stroke nor bowie thrust,
  While still, in wood or rocky glen,
Another redskin bit the dust.

ENVOI

Take up the long neglected pen,
  Redeem its valiant steel from rust,
And scrawl those magic words again:
  "Another redskin bit the dust!"

Arthur Guiterman

BALLADE OF THE OUBLIETTE *

And deeper still the deep-down oubliette,
Down thirty feet below the smiling day.
—*Tennyson.*

Sudden in the sun
An oubliette winks. Where is he? Gone.
—*Mrs. Browning.*

Gaoler of the donjon deep—
Black from pit to parapet—
In whose depths forever sleep
Famous bores whose sun has set,
Daily ope the portal; let
In the bores who daily bore.
Thrust—sans sorrow or regret—
Thrust them through the Little Door.

Warder of Oblivion's keep—
Dismal dank, and black as jet—
Through the fatal wicket sweep
All the pests we all have met.
Prithee, overlook no bet;
Grab them—singly, by the score—
And, lest they be with us yet,
Thrust them through the Little Door.

Lead them to the awful leap
With a merry chansonette;
Push them blithely off the steep;
We'll forgive them and forget.
Toss them, like a cigarette,
To the far Plutonian floor.
Drop them where they'll cease to fret—
Thrust them through the Little Door.

Keeper of the Oubliette,
Wouldst thou have us more and more
In thine everlasting debt—
Thrust them through the Little Door.

Bert Leston Taylor

* From *The So-Called Human Race* by B. L. Taylor. Copyright 1922 by Alfred A. Knopf, Publisher.

BALLADE OF CRYING FOR THE MOON

There are moons of all quarters and kinds,
  There's the moon of the Poacher's delight,
And the Harvester's Moon when the hinds
  Lead home the brown barley all night,
So brilliant she is and so bright;
  There's a Hunting Moon men watch the sky for,
And Dan Russell prepares him for flight,
  But, ah me, for the Moon that I cry for!

There's the little, new sickle one finds
  When (results, I admit, have been slight!)
I uncover my head to the winds
  And wish with the whole of my might;
  There are shields of full silver alight
  From the nights of lost Junes one might die for,—
Old Thames flowing golden and white,
  But, ah me, for the Moon that I cry for!

And in all of her beauty that blinds,
  And in all of her majesty dight,
'Twas Dian (in Dorian minds)
  Who darkling sought Latmos's height,
And, lost in the pines and the night,
  The lips of her shepherd she'd sigh for,
As Dolly the Milking-Maid might,
  But, ah me, for the Moon that I cry for!

ENVOY

Princess, I'm in sorriest plight,
  And I lack me the tongue to say why for,
But read me a little a-right—
  Ah me, for the Moon that I cry for!

Patrick R. Chalmers

THE OPTIMIST

Heed not the folk who sing or say
  In sonnet sad or sermon chill,
'Alas! alack! and well-a-day!
  This round world's but a bitter pill!'
  Poor porcupines of fretful quill!
Sometimes we quarrel with our lot:
  We, too, are sad and careful—still,
We'd rather be alive than not.

What though we wish the cats at play
  Would some one else's garden till;
Though Sophonisba drop the tray
  And all our worshipped Worcester spill,
  Though neighbours 'practise' loud and shrill,
Though May be cold and June be hot,
  Though April freeze and August grill,—
We'd rather be alive than not.

And, sometimes, on a summer's day
  To self and every mortal ill
We give the slip, we steal away,
  To lie beside some sedgy rill;
  The darkening years, the cares that kill,
A little while are well forgot;
  Deep in the broom upon the hill
We'd rather be alive than not.

Pistol, with oaths didst thou fulfil
  The task thy braggart tongue begot.
We eat our leek with better will,
  We'd rather be alive than not.

Graham R. Tomson

BALLADE OF SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHY

Wishful to add to my mental power,
  Avid of knowledge and wisdom, I
Pondered the Essays of Schopenhauer,
  Taking his terrible hills on high.
  Worried I was, and a trifle shy,
Fearful I'd find him a bit opaque!
  Thus does he say, with a soul-sick sigh:
"The best you get is an even break."

Life, he says, is awry and sour;
  Life, he adds, is sour and awry;
Love, he says, is a withered flower;
  Love, he adds, is a dragon-fly;
  Love, he swears, is the Major Lie;
Life, he vows, is the Great Mistake;
  No one can beat it, and few can tie.
The best you get is an even break.

Women, he says, are clouds that lower;
  Women dissemble and falsify.
(Those are things that The Conning Tower
  Cannot asseverate or deny.)
  Futile to struggle, and strain, and try;
Pleasure is freedom from pain and ache;
  The greatest thing you can do is die—
The best you get is an even break.

L'ENVOI

Gosh, I feel like a real good cry!
  Life, he says, is a cheat, a fake.
Well, I agree with the grouchy guy—
  The best you get is an even break.

Franklin P. Adams

A BALLADE OF SUICIDE

The gallows in my garden, people say,
Is new and neat and adequately tall.
I tie the noose on in a knowing way
As one that knots his necktie for a ball;
But just as all the neighbors—on the wall—
Are drawing a long breath to shout "Hurray!"
The strangest whim has seized me. . . . After all
I think I will not hang myself today.

To-morrow is the time I get my pay—
My uncle's sword is hanging in the hall—
I see a little cloud all pink and grey—
Perhaps the rector's mother will *not* call—
I fancy that I heard from Mr. Gall
That mushrooms could be cooked another way—
I never read the books of Juvenal—
I think I will not hang myself today.

The world will have another washing day;
The decadents decay; the pedants fall;
And H. G. Wells has found that children play,
And Bernard Shaw discovered that they squall;
Rationalists are growing rational—
And through thick woods one finds a stream astray,
So secret that the very sky seems small—
I think I will not hang myself today.

ENVOI

Prince, I can hear the trumpet of Germinal,
The tumbrils toiling up the terrible way;
Even today your royal head may fall—
I think I will not hang myself today.

Gilbert K. Chesterton

BALLADE OF THE ANCIENT WHEEZE

I wonder if, sunning in Eden's vales,
Fielding and Smollett still hold sway;
And Gaffer Chaucer sits swapping tales
With Old Sam Clemens and Rabelais?
And then I can hear, 'mid the merry play
Of wit and laughter's jovial din,
One or the other guffaw and say:
"A travelling salesman came to an inn—."

Over the scented Elysian swales
Pan strides piping to nymph and fay;
But down in the depths of the woodland dales
A whisper goes round where the men folk stay.
There's mischief abroad, or my wit's astray—
Shepherds a-chuckle and fauns a-grin—
Theocritus starts in the same old way;
"A travelling salesman came to an inn—."

This is the password of brother males,
Linking together the grave and gay,
Story that never grows old nor stales,
Jest that is stranger to Time's decay,
Life scarred veterans, old and gray,
Skinny of arm and lank of shin,
Cackle at thoughts of the old brave fray—
"A travelling salesman came to an inn—."

L'ENVOI

Prince, you are fashioned of mortal clay,
Tarry a little and quaff a skin.
I heard a good one the other day—
"A travelling salesman came to an inn—."

Nate Salsbury
Newman Levy

BALLADE OF OLD LAUGHTER

When I look back, as daylight closes,
  And count my gains and losses o'er,
Rough with the smooth; the rue, the roses;
  The lost and lovely that no more
  Come when I knock upon the door,
Or even answer when I call,
  I see, of all that went before,
The laughter was the best of all.

Man's life, some say, a thing of prose is;
  Not so his life—as mine of yore—
Who on Miranda's breast reposes—
  Ah! God, that fragrant frock she wore!
  Hid honey still at the heart's core
Her bosom like a hushed snow-fall—
  And yet, for all we kissed and swore,
The laughter was the best of all.

Truth after truth old Time discloses,
  But, as we hobble to fourscore,
Each finds that not as he supposes
  The gains for which he travailed sore:
  Glory or gold, the wine we pour,
The face that held our lives in thrall—
  Somehow the bravest grows a bore,
The laughter was the best of all.

ENVOI

Prince, much of wisdom heretofore
  Time's patient pages doth bescrawl;
This is the sum of all our lore—
  The laughter was the best of all.

Richard Le Gallienne

BALLADES À DOUBLE REFRAIN

BALLADE À DOUBLE REFRAIN

Keeper of promises made in spring,
  Gilder of squalor in lowly cot—
Ever true and unwavering—
  These are the things that Love is not!
  This is pretty to round the plot
Of a play, for the playwright knows he must
  Tickle our fancies to boil his pot—
For Love is a liar we love to trust!

Passion immortal that poets sing,
  Highest of gifts that the gods allot!
Healing balm of affliction's sting—
  These are the things that Love is not!
  Ay, we would it were so, God wot!
Snatch we at apples that turn to dust!
  Learn we wisdom, then? Not a jot,
For Love is a liar we love to trust!

Poets and dramatists! Ye who cling
  Still to the old romantic rot,
Though I am telling a bitter thing,
  These are the things that Love is not!
  Love is a breeze blowing cold and hot,
A young man's fancy—a withering gust
  Yet, let Love call and we rush to the spot,
For Love is a liar we love to trust!

L'ENVOI

Princess, I love you! I've quite forgot
These are the things that Love is not;
  'Tis bitter bread, but I beg a crust,
  For Love is a liar we love to trust!

Edwin Meade Robinson

BALLADE OF MIDSUMMER DAYS AND NIGHTS

(Double Refrain)

To W. H.

With a ripple of leaves and a tinkle of streams
The full world rolls in a rhythm of praise,
And the winds are one with the clouds and beams—
Midsummer days! Midsummer days!
The dusk grows vast; in a purple haze,
While the West from a rapture of sunset rights,
Faint stars their exquisite lamps upraise—
Midsummer nights! O midsummer nights!

The wood's green heart is a nest of dreams,
The lush grass thickens and springs and sways,
The rathe wheat rustles, the landscape gleams—
Midsummer days! Midsummer days!
In the stilly fields, in the stilly ways,
All secret shadows and mystic lights,
Late lovers murmur and linger and gaze—
Midsummer nights! O midsummer nights!

There's a music of bells from the trampling teams,
Wild skylarks hover, the gorses blaze,
The rich, ripe rose as with incense steams—
Midsummer days! Midsummer days!
A soul from the honeysuckle strays,
And the nightingale as from prophet heights
Sings to the Earth of her million Mays—
Midsummer nights! O midsummer nights!

ENVOY

And it's O, for my dear and the charm that stays—
Midsummer days! Midsummer days!
It's O, for my Love and the dark that plights—
Midsummer nights! O midsummer nights!

W. E. Henley

RAIN AND SHINE

(Ballade à double refrain)

The clouds are thick and darkly lower;
  The sullen sodden sky would fain
Pour down a never-ending shower:
  I hear the pattering of the rain,
  I hear it rattle on the pane.—
And then I see the mist entwining,
  Nor one position long retain.
Behold! the gentle sun is shining!

As though exulting in its power,
  The storm beats down with steady strain;
Upon the ivy of the tower
  I hear the pattering of the rain;
  It swiftly sweeps across the plain.—
And then I see the sky refining,
  And molten with a golden stain.
Behold! the gentle sun is shining!

Beneath the storm the cattle cower;
  It beats upon the growing grain,
And as it breaks both bud and flower,
  I hear the pattering of the rain,—
  From where the clouds too long have lain
They turn, and show a silver lining,
  A splendid glory comes again.
Behold! the gentle sun is shining!

ENVOY

Although like some far, faint refrain,
I hear the pattering of the rain,
The storm is past. No more repining—
Behold! the gentle sun is shining!

Brander Matthews

BALLADE OF YOUTH AND AGE

(Double Refrain)

Spring at her height on a morn at prime,
  Sails that laugh from a flying squall,
Pomp of harmony, rapture of rhyme—
  Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
  Winter sunsets and leaves that fall,
An empty flagon, a folded page,
  A tumble-down wheel, a tattered ball—
These are a type of the world of Age.

Bells that clash in a gorgeous chime,
  Swords that clatter in outsets tall,
The words that ring and the fames that climb—
  Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
  Old hymnals prone in a dusty stall,
A bald blind bird in a crazy cage,
  The scene of a faded festival—
These are a type of the world of Age.

Hours that strut as the heirs of time,
  Deeds whose rumour's a clarion-call,
Songs where the singers their souls sublime—
  Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
  A staff that rests in a nook of wall,
A reeling battle, a rusted gage,
  The chant of a nearing funeral—
These are a type of the world of Age.

ENVOY

Struggle and sacrifice, revel and brawl—
Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
  A smouldering hearth and a silent stage—
  These are a type of the world of Age.

W. E. Henley

BALLADE OF WISDOM AND FOLLY

(À Double Refrain)

I study wise themes with rigid care,
  Logic and law and philosophy,
Sermons and science, and I declare
  Wisdom's the goodliest gain for me.
  But when I read with a lively glee
Rollicking tales of fun and mirth,
  I laugh to myself, and I clearly see
Folly's the fairest thing on earth.

To copy the masters I oft repair,—
  Of Rubens and Rembrandt a devotee;
I study line and school with care,—
  Wisdom's the goodliest gain for me.
  Then I see a sketch in a lighter key,
Ah, line and school were never worth
  This little French bit of frivolity,—
Folly's the fairest thing on earth.

I know a girl who is calm and fair,
  Of ancient and noble pedigree;
She's wise and learnèd beyond compare,—
  Wisdom's the goodliest gain for me.
  But another holds my heart in fee,
Without her, life were a dreary dearth;
  Fickle and foolishly fond is she,—
Folly's the fairest thing on earth.

L'ENVOI

  Prince, I am sure you must agree
  Wisdom's the goodliest gain for me.
But ever I'll give it the widest berth,—
Folly's the fairest thing on earth.

Carolyn Wells

BALLADE OF THE REAL AND IDEAL

(Double Refrain)

O visions of salmon tremendous,
Of trout of unusual weight,
Of waters that wander as Ken does,
Ye come through the Ivory Gate!
But the skies that bring never a 'spate,'
But the flies that catch up in a thorn,
But the creel that is barren of freight,
Through the portals of horn!

O dreams of the Fates that attend us
With prints in the earliest state,
O bargains in books that they send us,
Ye come through the Ivory Gate!
But the tome of a dubious date,
But the quarto that's tattered and torn,
And bereft of a title and date,
Through the portals of horn!

O dreams of the tongues that commend us,
Of crowns for the laureate pate,
Of a Public to buy and befriend us,
Ye come through the Ivory Gate!
But the critics that slash us and slate,
But the people that hold us in scorn,
But the sorrow, the scathe, and the hate,
Through the portals of horn!

ENVOY

Fair dreams of things golden and great,
Ye come through the Ivory Gate;
But the facts that are bleak and forlorn,
Through the portals of horn!

Andrew Lang

A BALLADE OF DEATH AND TIME

I hold it truth with him who sweetly sings—
The weekly music of the *London Sphere*—
That deathless tomes the living present brings;
Great literature is with us year on year.
Books of the mighty dead, whom men revere,
Remind me I can make *my* books sublime.
But prithee, bay my brow while I am here:
Why do we always wait for Death and Time?

Shakespeare, great spirit, beat his mighty wings,
As I beat mine, for the occasion near.
He knew, as I, the worth of present things:
Great literature is with us year on year.
Methinks I meet across the gulf his clear
And tranquil eye; his calm reflections chime
With mine: "Why do we at the present fleer?
Why do we always wait for Death and Time?"

The reading world with acclamation rings
For my last book. It led the list at Weir,
Altoona, Rahway, Painted Post, Hot Springs:
Great literature is with us year on year.
The *Bookman* gives me a vociferous cheer.
Howells approves! I can no higher climb.
Bring then the laurel, crown my bright career.
Why do we always wait for Death and Time?

L'ENVOI

Critics, who pastward, ever pastward peer,
Great literature is with us year on year.
Trumpet my fame while I am in my prime.
Why do we always wait for Death and Time?

Bert Leston Taylor

THE BALLADE OF PROSE AND RHYME

(Ballade à double refrain)

When the roads are heavy with mire and rut,
  In November fogs, in December snows,
When the North Wind howls, and the doors are shut,
  There is place and enough for the pains of prose;—
  But whenever a scent from the whitethorn blows,
And the jasmine-stars to the casement climb,
  And a Rosalind-face at the lattice shows,
Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing rhyme!

When the brain gets dry as an empty nut,
  When the reason stands on its squarest toes,
When the mind (like a beard) has a "formal cut,"
  There is place and enough for the pains of prose;-
  But whenever the May-blood stirs and glows,
And the young year draws to the "golden prime,"—
  And Sir Romeo sticks in his ear a rose,
Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing rhyme!

In a theme where the thoughts have a pedant-strut
  In a changing quarrel of "Ayes" and "Noes,"
In a starched procession of "If" and "But,"
  There is place and enough for the pains of prose;—
  But whenever a soft glance softer grows,
And the light hours dance to the trysting-time,
  And the secret is told "that no one knows,"
Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing rhyme!

ENVOY

In the work-a-day world,—for its needs and woes,
There is place and enough for the pains of prose;
But whenever the May-bells clash and chime,
Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing rhyme!

Austin Dobson

DOUBLE BALLADES

DOUBLE BALLAD

Of the Singers of the Time.

I.

Why are our songs like the moan of the main,
  When the wild winds buffet it to and fro,
(Our brothers ask us again and again)
  A weary burden of hopes laid low?
  Have birds ceased singing or flowers to blow?
Is Life cast down from its fair estate?
  This I answer them—nothing mo'—
Songs and singers are out of date.

II.

What shall we sing of? Our hearts are fain,
  Our bosoms burn with a sterile glow.
Shall we sing of the sordid strife for gain,
  For shameful honour, for wealth and woe,
  Hunger and luxury,—weeds that throw
Up from one seeding their flowers of hate?
  Can we tune our lutes to these themes? Ah no!
Songs and singers are out of date.

III.

Our songs should be of Faith without stain,
  Of haughty honour and deaths that sow
The seeds of life on the battle-plain,
  Of loves unsullied and eyes that show
  The fair white soul in the deeps below.
Where are they, these that our songs await
  To wake to joyance? Doth any know?
Songs and singers are out of date.

IV.

What have we done with meadow and lane?
  Where are the flowers and the hawthorn-snow?
Acres of brick in the pitiless rain,—
  These are our gardens for thorpe and stow!
  Summer has left us long ago,
Gone to the lands where the turtles mate
  And the crickets chirp in the wild-rose row.
Songs and singers are out of date.

V.

We sit and sing to a world in pain;
  Our heartstrings quiver sadly and slow:
But, aye and anon, the murmurous strain
  Swells up to a clangour of strife and throe,
  And the folk that hearken, or friend or foe,
Are ware that the stress of the time is great
  And say to themselves, as they come and go,
Songs and singers are out of date.

VI.

Winter holds us, body and brain:
  Ice is over our being's flow;
Song is a flower that will droop and wane,
  If it have no heaven towards which to grow.
  Faith and beauty are dead, I trow
Nothing is left but fear and fate:
  Men are weary of hope; and so
Songs and singers are out of date.

John Payne

A DOUBLE BALLAD OF AUGUST

(1884)

All Afric, winged with death and fire,
Pants in our pleasant English air.
Each blade of grass is tense as wire,
And all the wood's loose trembling hair
Stark in the broad and breathless glare
Of hours whose touch wastes herb and tree,
This bright sharp death shines everywhere;
Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

Earth seems a corpse upon the pyre;
The sun, a scourge for slaves to bear.
All power to fear, all keen desire,
Lies dead as dreams of days that were
Before the new-born world lay bare
In heaven's wide eye, whereunder we
Lie breathless till the season spare:
Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

Fierce hours, with ravening fangs that tire
On spirit and sense, divide and share
The throbs of thoughts that scarce respire,
The throes of dreams that scarce forbear
One mute immitigable prayer
For cold perpetual sleep to be
Shed snowlike on the sense of care.
Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

The dust of ways where men suspire
Seems even the dust of death's dim lair.
But though the feverish days be dire
The sea-wind rears and cheers its fair
Blithe broods of babes that here and there
Make the sands laugh and glow for glee
With gladder flowers than gardens wear.
Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

The music dies not off the lyre
That lets no soul alive despair.
Sleep strikes not dumb the breathless choir
Of waves whose note bids sorrow spare.
As glad they sound, as fast they fare,
As when fate's word first set them free
And gave them light and night to wear.
Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

For there, though night and day conspire
To compass round with toil and snare
And changeless whirl of change, whose gyre
Draws all things deathwards unaware,
The spirit of life they scourge and scare,
Wild waves that follow on waves that flee
Laugh, knowing that yet, though earth despair
Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

DOUBLE BALLADE OF LIFE AND FATE

Fools may pine, and sots may swill,
Cynics gibe, and prophets rail,
Moralists may scourge and drill,
Preachers prose, and fainthearts quail.
Let them whine, or threat, or wail!
Till the touch of Circumstance
Down to darkness sink the scale,
Fate's a fiddler, Life's a dance.

What if skies be wan and chill?
What if winds be harsh and stale?
Presently the east will thrill,
And the sad and shrunken sail,
Bellying with a kindly gale,
Bear you sunwards, while your chance
Sends you back the hopeful hail:—
"Fate's a fiddler, Life's a dance."

Idle shot or coming bill,
Hapless love or broken bail,
Gulp it (never chew your pill!),
And, if Burgundy should fail,
Try the humbler pot of ale!
Over all is heaven's expanse.
Gold's to find among the shale.
Fate's a fiddler, Life's a dance.

Dull Sir Joskin sleeps his fill,
Good Sir Galahad seeks the Grail,
Proud Sir Pertinax flaunts his frill,
Hard Sir Æger dints his mail;
And the while by hill and dale
Tristram's braveries gleam and glance,
And his blithe horn tells its tale:—
"Fate's a fiddler, Life's a dance."

Araminta's grand and shrill,
Delia's passionate and frail,
Doris drives an earnest quill,
Athanasia takes the veil:
Wiser Phyllis o'er her pail,
At the heart of all romance
Reading, sings to Strephon's flail:—
"Fate's a fiddler, Life's a dance."

Every Jack must have his Jill,
(Even Johnson had his Thrale!):
Forward couples—with a will!
This, the world, is not a jail.
Hear the music, sprat and whale!
Hands across, retire, advance!
Though the doomsman's on your trail,
Fate's a fiddler, Life's a dance.

ENVOY

Boys and girls, at slug and snail
And their kindred look askance.
Pay your footing on the nail:
Fate's a fiddler, Life's a dance.

W. E. Henley

A DOUBLE BALLAD OF GOOD COUNSEL

(Villon)

Now take your fill of love and glee,
  And after balls and banquets hie;
In the end ye'll get no good for fee,
  But just heads broken by and by;
  Light loves make beasts of men that sigh;
They changed the faith of Solomon,
  And left not Samson lights to spy;
Good luck has he that deals with none!

Sweet Orpheus, lord of minstrelsy,
  For this with flute and pipe came nigh
The danger of the dog's heads three
  That ravening at hell's door doth lie;
  Fain was Narcissus, fair and shy,
For love's love lightly lost and won,
  In a deep well to drown and die;
Good luck has he that deals with none!

Sardana, flower of chivalry,
  Who conquered Crete with horn and cry,
For this was fain a maid to be
  And learn with girls the thread to ply;
  King David, wise in prophecy,
Forgot the fear of God for one
  Seen washing either shapely thigh;
Good luck has he that deals with none!

For this did Amnon, craftily
  Feigning to eat of cakes of rye,
Deflower his sister fair to see,
  Which was foul incest; and hereby
  Was Herod moved, it is no lie,
To lop the head of Baptist John
  For dance and jig and psaltery;
Good luck has he that deals with none!

Next of myself I tell, poor me,
  How thrashed like clothes at wash was I
Stark naked, I must needs agree;
  Who made me eat so sour a pie
  But Katherine of Vaucelles? thereby
Noé took third part of that fun;
  Such wedding-gloves are ill to buy;
Good luck has he that deals with none!

But for that young man fair and free
  To pass those young maids lightly by,
Nay, would you burn him quick, not he;
  Like broom-horsed witches though he fry,
  They are sweet as civet in his eye;
But trust them, and you're fooled anon;
  For white or brown, and low or high,
Good luck has he that deals with none!

Algernon Charles Swinburne

DOUBLE BALLADE OF THE NOTHINGNESS OF THINGS

The big teetotum twirls,
  And epochs wax and wane
As chance subsides or swirls;
  But of the loss and gain
  The sum is always plain.
Read on the mighty pall,
The weed of funeral
  That covers praise and blame,
The isms and the anities,
  Magnificence and shame,
"O Vanity of Vanities!"

The Fates are subtile girls!
  They give us chaff for grain;
And Time, the Thunderer, hurls,
  Like bolted death, disdain

At all that heart and brain
Conceive, or great or small,
Upon this earthly ball.
Would you be knight and dame?
Or woo the sweet humanities?
Or illustrate a name?
O Vanity of Vanities!

We sound the sea for pearls,
Or lose them in the drain;
We flute it with the merles,
Or tug and sweat and strain;
We grovel, or we reign;
We saunter, or we brawl;
We answer, or we call;
We search the stars for Fame,
Or sink her subterranities;
The legend's still the same:—
"O Vanity of Vanities!"

Here at the wine one birls,
There someone clanks a chain.
The flag that this man furls
That man to float is fain.
Pleasure gives place to pain: —
These in the kennel crawl,
While others take the wall.
She has a glorious aim,
He lives for the inanities.
What comes of every claim?
O Vanity of Vanities!

Alike are clods and earls.
For sot, and seer, and swain,
For emperors and for churls,
For antidote and bane,
There is but one refrain:
But one for king and thrall,
For David and for Saul,
For fleet of foot and lame,

For pieties and profanities,
  The picture and the frame—
"O Vanity of Vanities!"

Life is a smoke that curls—
  Curls in a flickering skein,
That winds and whisks and whirls,
  A figment thin and vain,
  Into the vast Inane.
One end for hut and hall!
One end for cell and stall!
  Burned in one common flame
Are wisdoms and insanities.
  For this alone we came:—
"O Vanity of Vanities!"

ENVOI

Prince, pride must have a fall.
What is the worth of all
  Your state's supreme urbanities?
Bad at the best's the game.
Well might the sage exclaim:—
  "O Vanity of Vanities!"

W. E. Henley

CHANTS ROYAL

THE PRAISE OF DIONYSUS

Chant Royal

Behold, above the mountains there is light,
A streak of gold, a line of gathering fire,
And the dim East hath suddenly grown bright
With pale aerial flame, that drives up higher
The lurid mists that of the night aware
Breasted the dark ravines and coverts bare;
Behold, behold! the granite gates unclose,
And down the vales a lyric people flows,
Who dance to music, and in dancing fling
Their frantic robes to every wind that blows,
And deathless praises to the vine-god sing.

Nearer they press, and nearer still in sight,
Still dancing blithely in a seemly choir;
Tossing on high the symbol of their rite.
The cone-tipped thyrsus of a god's desire;
Nearer they come, tall damsels flushed and fair,
With ivy circling their abundant hair,
Onward, with even pace, in stately rows,
With eye that flashes, and with cheek that glows,
And all the while their tribute-songs they bring,
And newer glories of the past disclose,
And deathless praises to the vine-god sing.

The pure luxuriance of their limbs is white,
And flashes clearer as they draw the nigher,
Bathed in an air of infinite delight,
Smooth without wound of thorn or fleck of mire,
Borne up by songs as by a trumpet's blare,
Leading the van to conquest, on they fare;
Fearless and bold, whoever comes or goes,

These shining cohorts of Bacchantes close,
Shouting and shouting till the mountains ring,
And forests grim forget their ancient woes,
And deathless praises to the vine-god sing.

And youths are there for whom full many a night
Brought dreams of bliss, vague dreams that haunt and tire,
Who rose in their own ecstasy bedight,
And wandered forth through many a scourging briar,
And waited shivering in the icy air,
And wrapped the leopard-skin about them there,
Knowing, for all the bitter air that froze,
The time must come, that every poet knows,
When he shall rise and feel himself a king,
And follow, follow where the ivy grows,
And deathless praises to the vine-god sing.

But oh! within the heart of this great flight,
Whose ivory arms hold up the golden lyre?
What form is this of more than mortal height?
What matchless beauty, what inspirèd ire!
The brindled panthers know the prize they bear,
And harmonise their steps with stately care;
Bent to the morning, like a living rose,
The immortal splendour of his face he shows,
And where he glances, leaf and flower and wing
Tremble with rapture, stirred in their repose,
And deathless praises to the vine-god sing.

ENVOI

Prince of the flute and ivy, all thy foes
Record the bounty that thy grace bestows,
But we, thy servants, to thy glory cling,
And with no frigid lips our songs compose,
And deathless praises to the vine-god sing.

Edmund Gosse

THE DANCE OF DEATH

(After Holbein)

"Contra vim MORTIS
Non est medicamen in hortis."

He is the despots' Despot. All must bide,
Later or soon, the message of his might;
Princes and potentates their heads must hide,
Touched by the awful sigil of his right;
Beside the Kaiser he at eve doth wait
And pours a potion in his cup of state;
The stately Queen his bidding must obey;
No keen-eyed Cardinal shall him affray;
And to the Dame that wantoneth he saith—
"Let be, Sweet-heart, to junket and to play."
There is no King more terrible than Death.

The lusty Lord, rejoicing in his pride,
He draweth down; before the armèd Knight
With jingling bridle-rein he still doth ride;
He crosseth the strong Captain in the fight;
The Burgher grave he beckons from debate;
He hales the Abbot by his shaven pate,
Nor for the Abbess' wailing will delay;
No bawling Mendicant shall say him nay;
E'en to the pyx the Priest he followeth,
Nor can the Leech his chilling finger stay.
There is no King more terrible than Death.

All things must bow to him. And woe betide
The Wine-bibber,—the Roisterer by night;
Him the feast-master, many bouts defied,
Him 'twixt the pledging and the cup shall smite;
Woe to the Lender at usurious rate,
The hard Rich Man, the hireling Advocate;
Woe to the Judge that selleth right for pay;

Woe to the Thief that like a beast of prey
With creeping tread the traveller harryeth:—
These, in their sin, the sudden sword shall slay.
There is no King more terrible than Death.

He hath no pity,—nor will be denied.
When the low hearth is garnishèd and bright,
Grimly he flingeth the dim portal wide,
And steals the Infant in the Mother's sight;
He hath no pity for the scorned of fate:—
He spares not Lazarus lying at the gate,
Nay, nor the Blind that stumbleth as he may;
Nay, the tired Ploughman,—at the sinking ray,—
In the last furrow,—feels an icy breath,
And knows a hand hath turned the team astray.
There is no King more terrible than Death.

He hath no pity. For the new-made Bride,
Blithe with the promise of her life's delight,
That wanders gladly by her Husband's side,
He with the clatter of his drum doth fright;
He scares the Virgin at the convent grate;
The Maid half-won, the Lover passionate;
He hath no grace for weakness and decay:
The tender Wife, the Widow bent and gray,
The feeble Sire whose footstep faltereth,—
All these he leadeth by the lonely way.
There is no King more terrible than Death.

ENVOY

YOUTH, for whose ear and monishing of late,
I sang of prodigals and lost estate,
Have thou thy joy of living and be gay;
But know not less that there must come a day,—
Aye, and perchance e'en now it hasteneth,—
When thine own heart shall speak to thee and say,—
There is no King more terrible than Death.

Austin Dobson

CHANT OF THE CHANGING HOURS

The Hours passed by, a fleet confusèd crowd;
  With wafture of blown garments bright as fire,
Light, light of foot and laughing, morning-browed,
  And where they trod the jonquil and the briar
Thrilled into jocund life, the dreaming dells
Waked to a morrice chime of jostled bells;—
They danced; they danced; to piping such as flings
The garnered music of a million Springs
  Into one single, keener ecstasy;—
One paused and shouted to my questionings:
  "Lo, I am Youth; I bid thee follow me!"

The Hours passed by; they paced, great lords and proud,
  Crowned on with sunlight, robed in rich attire;
Before their conquering word the brute deed bowed,
  And Ariel fancies served their large desire;
They spake, and roused the musèd soul that dwells
In dust, or, smiling, shaped new heavens and hells,
Dethroned old gods and made blind beggars kings:
"And what art thou," I cried to one, "that brings
  His mistress, for a brooch, the Galaxy?"—
"I am the plumèd thought that soars and sings:
  "Lo, I am Song; I bid thee follow me!"

The Hours passed by, with veilèd eyes endowed
  Of dream, and parted lips that scarce suspire,
To breathing dusk and arrowy moonlight vowed,
  South wind and shadowy grove and murmuring lyre;—
Swaying they moved, as drows'd of wizard spells
Or tranc'd with sight of recent miracles,
And yet they trembled, down their folded wings
Quivered the hint of sweet withholden things,
  Ah, bitter-sweet in their intensity!
One paused and said unto my wonderings:
  "Lo, I am Love; I bid thee follow me!"

The Hours passed by, through huddled cities loud
  With witless hate and stale with stinking mire:
So cowlèd monks might march with bier and shroud
  Down streets plague-spotted toward some cleansing
    pyre;—
Yet, lo! strange lilies bloomed in lightless cells,
And passionate spirits burst their clayey shells
And sang the stricken hope that bleeds and clings:
Earth's bruisèd heart beat in the throbbing strings,
  And joy still struggled through the threnody!
One stern Hour said unto my marvelings:
  "Lo, I am Life; I bid thee follow me!"

The Hours passed by, the stumbling hours and cowed,
  Uncertain, prone to tears and childish ire,—
The wavering hours that drift like any cloud
  At whim of winds or fortunate or dire,—
The feeble shapes that any chance expels;
Their wisdom useless, lacking the blood that swells
The tensèd vein: the hot, swift tide that stings
With life. Ah, wise! but naked to the slings
  Of fate, and plagued of youthful memory!
A cracked voice broke upon my pityings:
  "Lo, I am Age; I bid thee follow me!"

Ah, Youth! we dallied by the babbling wells
Where April all her lyric secret tells;—
Ah, Song! we sped our bold imaginings
As far as yon red planet's triple rings;—
  O Life! O Love! I followed, followed thee!
There waits one word to end my journeyings:
  "Lo, I am Death; I bid thee follow me!"

Don Marquis

CHANT ROYAL OF THE GOD OF LOVE

O most fair God! O Love both new and old,
  That wert before the flowers of morning blew,
Before the glad sun in his mail of gold
  Leapt into light across the first day's dew,

That art the first and last of our delight,
That in the blue day and the purple night
  Holdest the hearts of servant and of king,
  Lord of liesse, sovran of sorrowing,
That in thy hand hast heaven's golden key,
  And hell beneath the shadow of thy wing,
Thou art my Lord to whom I bend the knee!

What thing rejects thy mastery? Who so bold
  But at thine altars in the dusk they sue?
Even the strait pale Goddess, silver-stoled,
  That kissed Endymion when the spring was new,
To thee did homage in her own despite,
When in the shadow of her wings of white
  She slid down trembling from her moonèd ring,
  To where the Latmian youth lay slumbering,
And in that kiss put off cold chastity.
  Who but acclaim, with voice and pipe and string,
Thou art my Lord to whom I bend the knee?

Master of men and gods, in every fold
  Of thy wide vans, the sorceries that renew
The labouring earth tranced with the winter's cold
  Lie hid, the quintessential charms that woo
The souls of flowers, slain with the sullen might
Of the dead year, and draw them to the light.
  Balsam and blessing to thy garments cling:
  Skyward and seaward, whilst thy white palms fling
Their spells of healing over land and sea,
  One shout of homage makes the welkin ring,
Thou art my Lord to whom I bend the knee!

I see thee throned aloft: thy fair hands hold
  Myrtles for joy, and euphrasy and rue:
Laurels and roses round thy white brows rolled,
  And in thine eyes the royal heaven's hue:
But in thy lips' clear colour, ruddy bright,
The heart's blood shines of many a hapless wight.
  Thou art not only fair and sweet as Spring:

Terror and beauty, fear and wondering,
Meet on thy front, amazing all who see—
All men do praise thee—ay, and every thing!
Thou art my Lord to whom I bend the knee!

I fear thee, though I love. Who can behold
The sheer sun burning in the orbèd blue,
What while the noontide over hill and wold
Flames like a fire, except his mazèd view
Wither and tremble? So thy splendid sight
Fills me with mingled gladness and affright.
Thy visage haunts me in the wavering
Of dreams, and in the dawn, awakening,
I feel thy splendour streaming full on me.
Both joy and fear unto thy feet I bring:
Thou art my Lord to whom I bend the knee!

ENVOI

God above gods, High and Eternal King!
Whose praise the symphonies of heaven sing,
I find no whither from thy power to flee
Save in thy pinions' vast o'ershadowing:
Thou art my Lord to whom I bend the knee!

John Payne

THE DESTINED MAID: A PRAYER

(Chant Royal)

O mighty Queen, our Lady of the fire,
The light, the music, and the honey, all
Blent in one Power, one passionate Desire
Man calleth Love—'Sweet love,' the blessed call—
I come a sad-eyed suppliant to thy knee,
If thou hast pity, pity grant to me;
If thou hast bounty, here a heart I bring
For all that bounty 'thirst and hungering.
O Lady, save thy grace, there is no way
For me, I know, but lonely sorrowing—
Send me a maiden meet for love, I pray!

I lay in darkness, face down in the mire,
  And prayed that darkness might become my pall;
The rabble rout roared round me like some quire
  Of filthy animals primordial;
My heart seemed like a toad eternally
Prisoned in stone, ugly and sad as he;
  Sweet sunlight seemed a dream, a mystic thing,
  And life some beldam's dotard gossiping.
Then, Lady, I bethought me of thy sway,
  And hoped again, rose up this prayer to wing—
Send me a maiden meet for love, I pray!

Lady, I bear no high resounding lyre
  To hymn thy glory, and thy foes appal
With thunderous splendour of my rhythmic ire;
  A little lute I lightly touch and small
My skill thereon: yet, Lady, if it be
I ever woke ear-winning melody,
  'Twas for thy praise I sought the throbbing string,
  Thy praise alone—for all my worshipping
Is at thy shrine, thou knowest, day by day,
  Then shall it be in vain my plaint to sing?—
Send me a maiden meet for love, I pray!

Yea! why of all men should this sorrow dire
  Unto thy servant bitterly befall?
For, Lady, thou dost know I ne'er did tire
  Of thy sweet sacraments and ritual;
In morning meadows I have knelt to thee,
In noontide woodlands hearkened hushedly
  Thy heart's warm beat in sacred slumbering,
  And in the spaces of the night heard ring
Thy voice in answer to the spheral lay:
  Now 'neath thy throne my suppliant life I fling—
Send me a maiden meet for love, I pray!

I ask no maid for all men to admire,
  Mere body's beauty hath in me no thrall,
And noble birth, and sumptuous attire,
  Are gauds I crave not—yet shall have withal,

With a sweet difference, in my heart's own She,
Whom words speak not but eyes know when they see.
  Beauty beyond all glass's mirroring,
  And dream and glory hers for garmenting;
Her birth—O Lady, wilt thou say me nay?—
  Of thine own womb, of thine own nurturing—
Send me a maiden meet for love, I pray!

ENVOI

Sweet Queen who sittest at the heart of spring,
My life is thine, barren or blossoming;
  'Tis thine to flush it gold or leave it grey:
And so unto thy garment's hem I cling—
  Send me a maiden meet for love, I pray.

Richard Le Gallienne

CHANT ROYAL OF AUGUST

Queen, thou art found in toiling—where the wheat
  Grows ruddy-ripe and golden in the ear,
Where the scarlet poppies fall and faint with heat,
  Where no late lark is left to call or hear.
He sang, and sings not, for the golden haze
Of languorous August folds him in a maze,
  Fain to surcease of song; and he must bend
  To the Noon-Queen's high hesting; he must lend
His myriad music to the murmurous bee.
  Sole singer he, who doth all songs transcend,
The cool, white wind of healing from the sea.

Like a drift-snow in summer, wide wings beat.
  Whiter than cups of lilies, near and near
Come the strong ships of August, winging fleet—
  The wandering birds that all the North holds dear.
O stormy, sharp sea-wind, that smites and slays,
Blow soft and sighing on their white arrays,
  That they come safe before thee to the end,

Through perilous places where no songs ascend,
And shake from out the flowing hair of thee,
O golden Queen, so thou thy hosts defend,
The cool, white wind of healing from the sea.

In the deep woodland thou hast place and seat.
Soft eyes like flowers, sweet and shy with fear,
Come laughing round thee; and thou dost entreat
The wild-eyed water-kelpie from the mere,
Till all thy court of dryads and of fays
Cry fond farewell upon the summer days,
That fade like flowers whom no bees attend;
Full days, and nights of beauty; hither wend
The weary loves that wander ceaselessly,
Having dead hearts for comfort, and their friend
The cool, white wind of healing from the sea.

Thy two fair hands are filled with largesse meet,
With purple grapes and radiant apples clear;
With golden glowing sunflowers, good to greet
As thou art, fair and changing: for the tear
Wars with thy lovely laughter as it plays
From thy deep eyes, and bright brows crowned with bays
To thy most radiant mouth; wherein they blend
In storm or sunshine as thy heart forefend;
And in thy light hair lying royally
Waits, till on field or flower thou shalt it spend,
The cool, white wind of healing from the sea.

Thou standest in the orchards with quick feet,
When mellow apples from old boughs and sere
Hang tremulous; that ripen ere the peat—
A flying flame of purple on the year—
Grows grey for burning in the heather ways,
When children watch for windfalls and estrays;
When the great winds are gathering to rend
In hideous wrath and ruin none shall mend;
But yet Queen August is not bond, but free,
And blowing yet, though hitherward tempests trend,
The cool, white wind of healing from the sea.

L'ENVOI

Queen August, we in street and city penned,
Where dreamless nights and dolorous days offend,
  In summer's aftermath, cry wearily,
Be pitiful to hear us, and to send
  The cool, white wind of healing from the sea.

Ethel Talbot

THE CHANT OF THE CHILDREN OF THE MIST

(Chant Royal)

I waited on a mountain's midmost side,
  The lifting of a cloud, and standing there,
Keeping my soul in patience far and wide
  Beheld faint shadows wandering, felt the air
Stirred as with voices which in passing by
Still dulled its weary weight with many a sigh.
  No band of pilgrims or of soldiers they—
  These children of the mist—who took their way,
    Each one aloof, perplexed and pondering
  With steps untimed to music grave or gay;—
    This was a people that had lost its king.

In happier days of old it was their pride
  To serve him on their knee and some were 'ware
E'en of his voice or presence as they plied
  Their daily task, or ate their simple fare.
Now in new glory shrouded, far and nigh
He had withdrawn himself from ear and eye;
  Scorning such service as they knew to pay,
  His ministers were as the golden ray
    Shot from the sun when he would wake the spring,—
  Swift to perform and pliant to obey—
    This was a people that had lost its king.

Single as beasts, or if allied, allied
  But as the wolf who leaves his dusky lair
To hound for common need, which scarce supplied,
  He lone returns with his disputed share,—
Even so sole, so scornful, or so shy,
Each man of these pursued his way on high,
  Still high and higher, seeking through the grey
  Gloom of the mist, the lord of yesterday.
    Dim, serviceless, bereft and sorrowing
  Shadows continuing never in one stay;—
    This was a people that had lost its king.

Then as the day wore on, and none descried
  The longed-for presence, as the way grew bare,
As strength declined, and hope within them died,
  A sad new birth,—the fruit of their despair,—
Stirred in their midst, and with a human cry
Awoke a human love, and flushed a dry
  Sweet spring of tears, whose fertilising play
  Broke up the hard cold barriers of their clay,
    Till hands were stretched in help, or seen to cling
In fealty that were only joined to pray;
    This was a people that had lost its king.

So blent in heart and hand, so myriad-eyed,
  With gathering power and ever lessening care,
The veiled beguilements of the way defied
  They cleave the cloud, and climb that mountain fair;
Till lo! upon its crown at last they vie
In songs of rapture as they hail the sky,
  And trace their lost one through the vast array
  Of tuneful suns, which keep not now at bay
    Their questing love, but help to waft and wing;
  And over all a voice which seems to say,
    This is a people that has found its king!

ENVOY

Lord of our lives! Thou scorned us that day
  When at thy feet a scattered host we lay.

Behold us ONE! One mighty heart we bring,
Strong for thy tasks, and level to thy sway.
This was the people that had lost its king!

Emily Pfeiffer

KING BOREAS

(Chant Royal)

I sit enthroned 'mid icy wastes afar,
Beyond the level land of endless snow,
For months I see the brilliant polar star
Shine on a shore, the lonelier none may know.
Supreme I rule in monarchy of might,—
My realms are boundless as the realms of Night.
Proud court I hold, and tremblingly obey
My many minions from the isles of Day;
And when my heralds sound aloud, behold
My slaves appear with suppliant heads alway.
I am great Boreas, King of wind and cold.

I am the god of all the winds that are!
I blow where'er I list,—I come, I go.
Athwart the sky upon my cloud-capped car
I rein my steeds, swift-prancing to and fro.
The dreary woodlands shudder in affright
To hear my clarion on the mountain height.
The sobbing sea doth moan in pain, and pray,
"Is there no refuge from the storm-king's sway?"
I am as agèd as the earth is old,
Yet strong am I although my locks are grey;
I am great Boreas, King of wind and cold.

I loose my chains, and then with awful jar
And presage of disaster and dire woe,
Out rush the storms and sound the clash of war
'Gainst all the earth, and shrill their bugles blow.

I bid them haste; they bound in eager flight
Toward far fair lands, where'er the sun's warm light
  Makes mirth and joyance; there, in rude affray,
  They trample down, despoil, and crush and slay.
They turn green meadows to a desert wold,
  And naught for rulers of the earth care they;—
I am great Boreas, King of wind and cold.

When in the sky, a lambent scimitar,
  In early eve Endymion's bride doth glow,
When night is perfect, and no cloud doth mar
  The peace of nature, when the rivers' flow
Is soft and musical, and when the sprite
Whispers to lovers on each breeze bedight
  With fragrance, then I steal forth, as I may,
  And seize upon whate'er I will for prey.
I see the billows high as hilltops rolled,
  And clutch and flaunt aloft the snowy spray!
I am great Boreas, King of wind and cold.

I am in league with Death. When I unbar
  My triple-guarded doors, and there bestow
Upon my frost-fiends freedom, bid them scar
  The brightest dales with summer blooms a-row,
They breathe on every bower a deadly blight,
And all is sere and withered in their sight.
  Unheeded now, Apollo's warming ray
  Wakes not the flower, for my chill breezes play
Where once soft zephyrs swayed the marigold,
  And where his jargon piped the noisy jay,—
I am great Boreas, King of wind and cold.

ENVOY

O Princes, hearken what my trumpets say!—
"Man's life is naught, no mortal lives for aye;
  His might hath empire only of the mold,"
Boast not yourselves, ye fragile forms of clay!
  I am great Boreas, King of wind and cold.

Clinton Scollard

THE NEW EPIPHANY

(Chant Royal)

Awake, awake, nay, slumber not, nor sleep!
  Forth from the dreamland and black dome of night,
From chaos and thick darkness, from the deep
  Of formless being, comes a gracious light,
Gilding the crystal seas, and casting round
A golden glory on the enchanted ground;—
  Awake, O souls of harmony, and ye
  That greet the dayspring with your jubilee
Of lute and harp! Awake, awake, and bring
  Your well-tuned cymbals, and go forth with glee,
Go forth, and welcome the eternal king.

Far o'er the hills have not the watchful sheep
  Espied their shepherd, and with eager flight
Gone forth to meet him on the craggy steep;
  Hasting the while his summoning notes invite
Where riper grasses and green herbs abound:—
But ye! your shepherd calls, thrice happy sound!
  He comes, he comes, your shepherd king, 'tis he!
  Oh, quit these close-cropped meads, and gladly flee
To him who makes once more new growths upspring;
  Oh, quit your ancient glebes,—oh, joyfully
Go forth, and welcome the eternal king.

Too long ye till exhausted lands and reap
  Thin crops that ne'er your weary toil requite:
Too long your laggard oxen labouring creep
  Up the wide furrows, and full idly smite
The weed-encircled ridge, the rocky mound:
Will ye not quit these fields now barren found?
  Ah! ye are old, yet not too old to be
  Brave travellers o'er bald custom's boundary;—
Then each, let each his robe around him fling,
  And with his little one, his child, set free,
Go forth, and welcome the eternal king.

See, on the strand, watching the waves that sweep
  Their creamy ripples up the sandy bight,
Your child waits, leaping as the wavelets leap,
  The faery infant of the infinite!
Ah! happy child, with what new wonders crowned
He'll turn to thee to fathom and expound;
  Asking, enquiring, looking unto thee
  To solve the universe, its destiny;—
And still unto thy vestment's hem will cling,
  Asking, enquiring,—whispering, may not we
Go forth, and welcome the eternal king.

Oh, linger not, no longer vainly weep
  O'er vanished hopes, but with new strength unite;
Oh, linger not! But let your glad eyes keep
  Watch on this guiding star that beams so bright;
Around your brows be this phylacter bound,—
Let Truth be king and let his praise resound!
  Oh, linger not! Let earth, and sky, and sea,
  To sound his praises let all hearts agree;
Still loud, and louder, let your pæans ring,
  Go forth, go forth, in glad exultancy
Go forth, and welcome the eternal king.

ENVOY

  Thou art the king, O Truth! we bend the knee
  To thee; we own thy wondrous sovranty;
And still thy praises in our songs we'll sing,
  Bidding all people with blithe minstrelsy
Go forth, and welcome the eternal king.

Samuel Waddington

CHANT-ROYAL OF THE TRUE ROMANCE

Romance is dead, say some, and so, to-day,
  Honour and Chivalry are faint and cold;
And now, Adventure has no modern way
  To stir the blood, as in the days of old.

They mourn the times of Gallantry as done,
Knighthood has seen the setting of its sun,
And fairy, nymph and genie, grown too shy,
No more, in these new lands, hold revel high;
  There lives no mystery, now, and they cry woe
To this old world, so twisted and awry!
  Romance is dead, say some; but I say No!

Haroun-al-Raschid, so the sceptics say,
  Would seek in vain for sights his book has told—
Crusoe could find no island far away
  Enough, his life with glamour to enfold—
Ulysses now might rove, nor fear to run
The risks of perils Homer's fable spun—
And Hiawatha's white canoe would try
In vain to find some beach, whence to descry
  The hunting-grounds where once he bent his bow.
Gone are the Halcyon Days, they sadly sigh;
  Romance is dead, say some; but I say No!

Not while the ancient sea casts up its spray
  Upon the laughing beach, and I behold
The myriad dancing ripples of the bay
  Speed out to meet the sunset's robe of gold;
Not till the last ship's voyage has begun;
Not till the storm god's lightnings cease to stun!
Not till the mountains lift no more to sky
Their secret fastnesses, and forests vie
  No more with winds and mists, with sun and snow,
And rustling fields no more to streams reply!
  Romance is dead, say some; but I say No!

Not while the Night maintains her mystic sway,
  And conjures, in the haunted wood and wold,
Her eerie shadows, fanciful and fey,
  With priests of Darkness, pale and sombre-stoled;
Not while upon the Sea of Dreams are won
Strange ventures, escapades, and frolic fun;
Where tricksy phantoms, whimsically sly,

Order your deeds, you know not how nor why;
  Where Reason, Wit, and Conscience drunken go.
Have you e'er dreamed, and still can question? Fie!
  Romance is dead, say some; but I say No!

Not while Youth lives and Springtime bids be gay!
  Not while love blooms, and lovers dare be bold!
Not while a poet sings his roundelay,
  Or men by maiden's kisses are cajoled!
You have not seen her, or you, too, would shun
The thought that in this world Romance there's none;
For oh, my Love has power to beautify
My whole life long, and all its charm supply;
  My bliss, my youth, my dreams, to her I owe!
And so, ye scornful cynics, I deny;
  Romance is dead, say some; but I say No!

ENVOY

God, keep my youth and love alive, that I
May wonder at this world until I die!
  Let sea and mountain speak to me, that so,
Waking or sleeping, I may fight the lie;
  Romance is dead, say some; but I say No!

Gelett Burgess

CHANT-ROYAL OF CALIFORNIA

Onward the Nation marches, and in sight
  Of this far Western sea, whose ripples glow
Wide towards the sunset, with its staff does smite
  The rock of Hope, that golden streams may flow.
This is our Promised Land, beyond compare
The most prolific Eden, rich and fair!
Here may we lay our hearth-stones, and with glee
Of new possession, and with song, may we
  Set out the grape and fig, and seed-corn strew.
Ah, gallant husbandmen, what soil have ye!
  This vintage shall the old world's youth renew!

O maiden West! What need to re-indite
  Her beauties and her blessings—all men know!
The day rings with her laughter of delight,
  All of earth's good she has, without the woe.
The joy of youth is hers—a future rare
Is hers to win, to foster and to share;
Strong, reckless, frank and jubilant is she,
Holding with thoughtless hand her fortune's key;
  Yet, underneath her sun and heavens blue
The vine shall yield, and it shall come to be
  This vintage shall the old world's youth renew!

Bring no old myths to exercise their might
  O'er her grey mountains' grim defending row;
Let the past heroes linger in the night,
  Nor haunt her meadows, where wild flowers blow!
False gods are all behind; ah, leave them there—
Let the new race dare breathe her fresher air!
Tribe after tribe has lived, and left her free;
Aztec and Indian hailed Yosemite,
  Shasta and Tamalpais—the Spaniard, too,
Passed with the Russ; but 'twas her fate's decree
  This vintage shall the old world's youth renew!

Then may we garner nothing but the Right,
  The seeds of Error may we never sow!
The soil is virgin and the sunshine bright,
  The glad warm rains shall teach the bud to grow.
Strike deep the furrow straight with forthright care
And gather all the lavish Seasons bear;
Then shall a Nation rise, of such degree
As never Argonaut dared hope to see!
  A thousand harvests shall not half subdue
The power of this land's abundant fee;
  This vintage shall the old world's youth renew!

High as her hills shall be her honour's height,
  Deep as her gorges loyalty shall go;
Broad as her plains, or as her eagle's flight
  Shall be the Freedom she shall then bestow.

This is our field; so gird ye, and be yare
To conquer and to hold, to brave and dare
The perils of her wealth—nor bow the knee
To the dead laws, nor from live truths to flee!
  Thus, only, must we fare the long years through,
If the land fatten—and be this our plea:
  This vintage shall the old world's youth renew!

ENVOY

O Pioneer, what task is set for thee!
Not thine to taste the fruit, but plant the tree;
  The years of strife are thine; if thou art true,
Thy sons' sons shall enjoy the Jubilee;
  This vintage shall the old world's youth renew!

Gelett Burgess

BALLADE OF FAREWELL *

New roads to fare, new toils to overthrow,
  New fields, made rich with fern and floweret,
And beckoning seas where brave winds merrily blow
  Over the sun-bright waves of dawn—and yet,
  Never one sun rose but another set. . . .
Wherefore, beseech you, count me not as they
Who shun the venture and avoid the fray,
  Though I should pause within the empty hall,
By the old hearth bow down to dream and pray,
  And bid at last a long farewell to all.

Dim elms deepen the summer gloom below,
  Tangling the drowsy breeze in a soft net
Of slowly waving leaves; an amber glow
  Streams out of many windows, over wet
  Green grass, gray tower, and vine-hung parapet;
And careless gusts of song start up, and stray

Among the shadows; the city's distant bray
  Softens; and happy voices clash and call
One to another, as I turn away,
  And bid at last a long farewell to all.

Youth, and high hearts welcoming friend and foe,
  Careless of fear or failure; the clear jet
And rainbow-spray of joyance; and the flow
  Of easy slumber to a morning met
  Blithely, fresh-eyed; madrigal, canzonet,
Drink with glad boys and dance with maidens gay,
Scorn of such laws as weaker souls obey—
  Carouse, adventure, dalliance, tryst, and brawl—
Must we disown the sweetness of their sway,
  And bid at last a long farewell to all?

These things are ebbing from us: and although
  It is more wise to frolic than to fret,
Good to strew garlands on the grave of woe,
  Good to drink deep of laughter, and forget
  Weariness, and chill twilights, and the debt
Inexorable that even we must pay
Who in the House of Life rejoice to stay—
  Nevertheless, we find the banquets pall,
See the leaves wither, and the lights turn gray,
  And bid at last a long farewell to all.

Wherefore, with half my days foregone, I go
  Now to begin true labour. I regret
Only the song unborn, the unbent bow
  Whose quarry leaps unscathed. Nor dare I let
  My heart shrink from the turmoil and the sweat;
For even already have I seen decay
The glamour and dew-freshness of the May
  And felt a weary body faint and fall,
Remembering how I must fear delay,
  And bid at last a long farewell to all.

ENVOI

Princes of Mirth! Let no power disarray
The pageants and fair trappings of our play,
  Until we turn our faces to the wall,
Smile down the glimmering slopes of yesterday,
  And bid at last a long farewell to all.

Brian Hooker

RONDELS

RONDEL

Charles D'Orléans, 1391–1465

To his Mistress, to succour his heart that is beleaguered by jealousy.

Strengthen, my Love, this castle of my heart,
  And with some store of pleasure give me aid,
For Jealousy, with all them of his part,
  Strong siege about the weary tower has laid.
  Nay, if to break his bands thou art afraid,
Too weak to make his cruel force depart,
Strengthen at least this castle of my heart,
  And with some store of pleasure give me aid.
Nay, let not Jealousy, for all his art
  Be master, and the tower in ruin laid,
  That still, ah Love! thy gracious rule obeyed.
Advance, and give me succour of thy part;
Strengthen, my Love, this castle of my heart.

Andrew Lang

RONDEL

(After Charles d'Orléans)

The world has cast her habiting
Of wind, of frost, of cold grey rain;
In sunny robes of braver grain
She dons the broidery of Spring
And every tiny living thing
In his own way declares amain:
"The world has cast her habiting
Of wind, of frost, of cold grey rain."

And streams and brooks the tidings bring
Wearing their liveries again
Of gold and silver; Winter slain,
April may laugh aloud, and sing:
"The world has cast her habiting
Of wind, of frost, of cold grey rain."

Christopher Morley

FROM THÉODORE DE BANVILLE

I

NIGHT

We bless the coming of the Night,
  Whose cool sweet kiss has set us free,
  Life's clamour and anxiety
Her mantle covers out of sight.
All eating cares have taken flight,
  The scented air is wine to me;
We bless the coming of the Night,
  Whose cool sweet kiss has set us free.
Rest now, O reader, worn and white,
  Driven by some divinity,
  Aloft, like sparkling hoar frost see,
A starry ocean throb in light,
We bless the coming of the Night.

II

THE MOON

The moon, with all her tricksy ways,
  Is like a careless young coquette,
  Who smiles, and then her eyes are wet,
And flies or follows or delays.
By night, along the sand-hills' maze,
  She leads and mocks you till you fret.
The moon with all her tricksy ways,
  Is like a careless young coquette.

As oft she veils herself in haze,
  A cloak before her splendour set;
  She is a silly charming pet,
We needs must give her love and praise,
The moon with all her tricksy ways.

Arthur Reed Ropes

UPON THE STAIR I SEE MY LADY STAND

(Rondel)

Upon the stair I see my lady stand,
  Her hair is like the gleaming gold of dawn,
  And, like the laughing sunbeam on the lawn,
The radiant smile by which her lips are spanned.

A chiselled marvel seems her slender hand
  What time she waves it ere my steps are gone;
Upon the stair I see my lady stand,
  Her hair is like the gleaming gold of dawn.

Through the green covert that the breeze has fanned
  She fleets as graceful as the flexile fawn;
  She is the star to which my soul is drawn
When shadows drive the daylight from the land.
Upon the stair I see my lady stand,
  Her hair is like the gleaming gold of dawn.

Clinton Scollard

READY FOR THE RIDE—1795

(Rondel)

Through the fresh fairness of the Spring to ride,
  As in the old days when he rode with her,
With joy of Love that has fond Hope to bride,
  One year ago had made her pulses stir.

Now shall no wish with any day recur
(For Love and Death part year and year full wide),
Through the fresh fairness of the Spring to ride,
As in the old days when he rode with her.

No ghost there lingers of the smile that died
On the sweet pale lip where his kisses were—
Yet still she turns her delicate head aside,
If she may hear him come, with jingling spur—
Through the fresh fairness of the Spring to ride,
As in the old days when he rode with her.

H. C. Bunner

RONDEL

Kiss me, sweetheart, the Spring is here,
And Love is lord of you and me!
The bluebells beckon each passing bee;
The wild wood laughs to the flowered year;
There is no bird in brake or brere
But to his little mate sings he,
"Kiss me, sweetheart, the Spring is here,
And Love is lord of you and me."

The blue sky laughs out sweet and clear;
The missel-thrush upon the tree
Pipes for sheer gladness loud and free;
And I go singing to my dear,
"Kiss me, sweetheart, the Spring is here,
And Love is lord of you and me!"

John Payne

"AWAKE, AWAKE!" *

Awake, awake, O gracious heart,
  There's some one knocking at the door!
The chilling breezes make him smart;
  His little feet are tired and sore.

Arise, and welcome him before
  Adown his cheeks the big tears start:
  Awake, awake, O gracious heart,
There's some one knocking at the door!

'Tis Cupid come with loving art
  To honor, worship, and implore;
And lest, unwelcomed, he depart
  With all his wise, mysterious lore,
Awake, awake, O gracious heart,
  There's some one knocking at the door!

Frank Dempster Sherman

RONDEL

This book of hours Love wrought
  With burnished letters gold;
Each page with art and thought,
  And colours manifold.

His calendar he taught
  To youths and virgins cold;
This book of hours Love wrought
  With burnished letters gold.

This priceless book is bought
  With sighs and tears untold,

Of votaries who sought
  His countenance of old—
This book of hours Love wrought
  With burnished letters gold.

Walter Crane

RONDEL

When time upon the wing
  A swallow heedless flies,
Love-birds forget to sing
  Beneath the lucent skies.

For now belated spring
  With her last blossom hies,
When time upon the wing
  A swallow heedless flies.

What summer hope shall bring
  To wistful dreaming eyes?
What fateful forecast fling
  Before life's last surprise,
When time upon the wing
  A swallow heedless flies?

Walter Crane

RONDEL

I love you dearly, O my sweet!
  Although you pass me lightly by,
  Although you weave my life awry,
And tread my heart beneath your feet.

  I tremble at your touch; I sigh
To see you passing down the street;
I love you dearly, O my sweet!
  Although you pass me lightly by.

You say in scorn that love's a cheat,
  Passion a blunder, youth a lie.
I know not.- Only when we meet
  I long to kiss your hand and cry,
"I love you dearly, O my sweet,
  Although you pass me lightly by."

Justin Huntley McCarthy

"VITAS HINNULEO"

You shun me, Chloe, wild and shy
  As some stray fawn that seeks its mother
Through trackless woods. If spring-winds sigh,
  It vainly strives its fears to smother;—

Its trembling knees assail each other
  When lizards stir the bramble dry;—
  You shun me, Chloe, wild and shy
As some stray fawn that seeks its mother.

And yet no Libyan lion I,—
  No ravening thing to rend another;
Lay by your tears, your tremors by—
  A Husband's better than a brother;
Nor shun me, Chloe, wild and shy
  As some stray fawn that seeks its mother.

Austin Dobson

THE WANDERER

Love comes back to his vacant dwelling,—
  The old, old Love that we knew of yore!
  We see him stand by the open door,
With his great eyes sad, and his bosom swelling.

He makes as though in our arms repelling,
  He fain would lie as he lay before;—
Love comes back to his vacant dwelling,—
  The old, old Love that we knew of yore!

Ah, who shall help us from over-spelling
  That sweet, forgotten, forbidden lore!
  E'en as we doubt in our heart once more,
With a rush of tears to our eyelids welling,
Love comes back to his vacant dwelling.

Austin Dobson

TWILIGHT

Someone has lit the lamp, and hung
The house with curtains of cool blue,
Someone (I cannot tell you who)
Has put bright candles all among
Our empty rooms. Since we are young
For keeping house, and only two,
Someone has lit the lamp, and hung
The house with curtains of cool blue.
  Our lamp, the moon so deftly swung
Aloft; the stars our candles new;
Our housekeeper? I have no clue
I only know what I have sung—
Someone has lit the lamp, and hung
The house with curtains of cool blue.

Christopher Morley

RONDEL OF PERFECT FRIENDSHIP

Friend of my soul, forever true,
  What do we care for flying years,
  Unburdened all by doubts or fears,
Trusting what naught can e'er subdue?

Fate leads! Her path is out of view;
  Nor time nor distance interferes!
Friend of my soul, forever true,
  What do we care for flying years?

For, planted when the world was new,
  In other lives, in other spheres,
  Our love to-day a bud appears—
Not yet the blossom's perfect hue,
Friend of my soul, forever true!

Gelett Burgess

SINCE I AM SWORN TO LIVE MY LIFE *

Since I am sworn to live my life
And not to keep an easy heart,
Some men may sit and drink apart,
I bear a banner in the strife.

Some can take quiet thought to wife,
I am all day at *tierce* and *carte*,
Since I am sworn to live my life
And not to keep an easy heart.

I follow gaily to the fife,
Leave Wisdom bowed above a chart,
And Prudence brawling in the mart,
And dare Misfortune to the knife,
Since I am sworn to live my life.

Robert Louis Stevenson

WE'LL WALK THE WOODS NO MORE †

Nous N'Irons Plus au Bois

We'll walk the woods no more,
But stay beside the fire,
To weep for old desire
And things that are no more.
  The woods are spoiled and hoar,
The ways are full of mire;
We'll walk the woods no more,
But stay beside the fire.

* From *The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson*, by Graham Balfour. Copyright 1901 by Charles Scribner's Sons, Publishers.

† From *Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, by Sidney Colvin. Copyright 1911 by Charles Scribner's Sons, Publishers.

We loved, in days of yore,
Love, laughter, and the lyre.
Ah God, but death is dire,
And death is at the door—
We'll walk the woods no more.

Robert Louis Stevenson

FAR HAVE YOU COME, MY LADY, FROM THE TOWN *

Far have you come, my lady, from the town,
And far from all your sorrows, if you please,
To smell the good sea-winds and hear the seas,
And in green meadows lay your body down.

To find your pale face grow from pale to brown,
Your sad eyes growing brighter by degrees;
Far have you come, my lady, from the town,
And far from all your sorrows, if you please.

Here in this seaboard land of old renown,
In meadow grass go wading to the knees;
Bathe your whole soul a while in simple ease;
There is no sorrow but the sea can drown;
Far have you come, my lady, from the town.

Robert Louis Stevenson

VARIATIONS

I

"Alons au bois le may cueillir."—CHARLES D'ORLÉANS.

We'll to the woods and gather may
  Fresh from the footprints of the rain;
  We'll to the woods, at every vein
To drink the spirit of the day.

* From *Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, by Sidney Colvin.

The winds of spring are out at play,
  The needs of spring in heart and brain.
We'll to the woods and gather may
  Fresh from the footprints of the rain.
The world's too near her end, you say?—
  Hark to the blackbird's mad refrain!
  It waits for her, the vast Inane?—
Then, girls, to help her on the way
We'll to the woods and gather may.

W. E. Henley

II

"Ainsi qu' aux fleurs la vieillesse,
Fera ternir votre beauté."—RONSARD.

And lightly, like the flowers,
  Your beauties Age will dim,
  Who makes the song a hymn,
And turns the sweets to sours!

Alas! the chubby Hours
  Grow lank and grey and grim,
And lightly, like the flowers,
  Your beauties Age will dim.

Still rosy are the bowers,
  The walks yet green and trim.
  Among them let your whim
Pass sweetly, like the showers,
And lightly, like the flowers.

W. E. Henley

ROUNDELS OF THE YEAR*

I caught the changes of the year
In soft and fragile nets of song,
For you to whom my days belong.

* Used by permission of, and by arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company.

For you to whom each day is dear
Of all the high processional throng,
I caught the changes of the year
In soft and fragile nets of song.

And here some sound of beauty, here
Some note of ancient, ageless wrong
Re-shaping as my lips were strong
I caught the changes of the year
In soft and fragile nets of song,
For you to whom my days belong.

I

The spring is passing through the land
In web of ghostly green arrayed,
And blood is warm in man and maid.

The arches of desire have spanned
The barren ways, the debt is paid,
The spring is passing through the land
In web of ghostly green arrayed.

Sweet scents along the winds are fanned
From shadowy wood and secret glade
Where beauty blossoms unafraid.
The spring is passing through the land
In web of ghostly green arrayed,
And blood is warm in man and maid.

II

Proud insolent June with burning lips
Holds riot now from sea to sea,
And shod in sovran gold is she.

To the full flood of reaping slips
The seeding-time by God's decree,
Proud insolent June with burning lips
Holds riot now from sea to sea.

And all the goodly fellowships
Of bird and bloom and beast and tree
Are gallant of her company—
  Proud insolent June with burning lips
  Holds riot now from sea to sea,
  And shod in sovran gold is she.

III

The loaded sheaves are harvested,
The sheep are in the stubbled fold,
The tale of labour crowned is told.

The wizard of the year has spread
A glory over wood and wold,
  The loaded sheaves are harvested,
  The sheep are in the stubbled fold.

The yellow apples and the red
Bear down the boughs, the hazels hold
No more their fruit in cups of gold.
  The loaded sheaves are harvested,
  The sheep are in the stubbled fold,
  The tale of labour crowned is told.

IV

The year is lapsing into time
Along a deep and songless gloom,
Unchapleted of leaf or bloom.

And mute between the dusk and prime
The diligent earth re-sets her loom,—
  The year is lapsing into time
  Along a deep and songless gloom.

While o'er the snows the seasons chime
Their golden hopes to re-illume
The brief eclipse about the tomb,
  The year is lapsing into time
  Along a deep and songless gloom,
  Unchapleted of leaf or bloom.

Not wise as cunning scholars are,
With curious words upon your tongue,
Are you for whom my song is sung.

But you are wise of cloud and star,
And winds and boughs all blossom-hung,
Not wise as cunning scholars are,
With curious words upon your tongue.

Surely, clear child of earth, some far
Dim Dryad-haunted groves among,
Your lips to lips of knowledge clung—
Not wise as cunning scholars are,
With curious words upon your tongue,
Are you for whom my song is sung.

John Drinkwater

RONDELS

I

The lilacs are in bloom,
All is that ever was,
And Cupids peep and pass
Through the curtains of the room.

Season of light perfume,
Hide all beneath thy grass.
The lilacs are in bloom,
All is that ever was.

Dead hopes new shapes assume;
Town belle and country lass
Forget the word "Alas,"
For over every tomb
The lilacs are in bloom.

II

Summer has seen decay
  Of roses white and red,
  And Love with wings outspread
Speeds after yesterday.

Blue skies have changed to grey,
  And joy has sorrow wed:
Summer has seen decay
  Of roses white and red.

May's flowers outlast not May;
  And when the hour has fled,
  Around the roses dead
The mournful echoes say—
Summer has seen decay.

George Moore

O HONEY OF HYMETTUS HILL *

Rondel

(Dobson's Variation)

O honey of Hymettus Hill,
  Gold-brown, and cloying sweet to taste,
Wert here for the soft amorous bill
  Of Aphrodite's courser placed?

  Thy musky scent what virginal chaste
Blossom was ravished to distill,
O honey of Hymettus Hill,
  Gold-brown, and cloying sweet to taste?

* From *The Poems of H. C. Bunner.* Copyright, 1917, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

What upturned calyx drank its fill
  When ran the draught divine to waste,
That her white hands were doomed to spill—
  Sweet Hebe, fallen and disgraced—
O honey of Hymettus Hill,
  Gold-brown, and cloying sweet to taste?

Henry Cuyler Bunner

RONDEL FOR SEPTEMBER

You thought it was a falling leaf we heard:
I knew it was the Summer's gypsy feet,
A sound so reticent it scarcely stirred
The ear, so still a message to repeat,—
"I go, and lo, I make my going sweet."
What wonder you should miss so soft a word?
You thought it was a falling leaf we heard:
I knew it was the Summer's gypsy feet.

With slender torches for her service meet
The golden-rod is coming; softer slurred
Midsummer noises take a note replete
With hint of change; who told the mocking-bird?
I knew it was the Summer's gypsy feet—
You thought it was a falling leaf we heard.

Karle Wilson Baker

"BEFORE THE DAWN"

Before the dawn begins to glow,
  A ghostly company I keep;
  Across the silent room they creep,
The buried forms of friend and foe.
Amid the throng that come and go,
  There are two eyes that make me weep;
Before the dawn begins to glow,
  A ghostly company I keep.

Two dear dead eyes. I love them so!
  They shine like starlight on the deep;
  And often when I am asleep
They stoop and kiss me, bending low,
  Before the dawn begins to glow.

Samuel Minturn Peck

TWO RONDELS

I

When on the mid sea of the night,
  I waken at thy call, O Lord.
  The first that troop my bark aboard
Are darksome imps that hate the light,
Whose tongues are arrows, eyes a blight—
  Of wraths and cares a pirate horde—
Though on the mid sea of the night
  It was thy call that waked me, Lord.

Then I must to my arms and fight—
  Catch up my shield and two-edged sword,
  The words of him who is thy word;
Nor cease till they are put to flight:—
Then in the mid sea of the night
  I turn and listen for thee, Lord.

II

There comes no voice from thee, O Lord,
  Across the mid sea of the night!
  I lift my voice and cry with might:
If thou keep silent, soon a horde
Of imps again will swarm aboard,
  And I shall be in sorry plight
If no voice come from thee, O Lord,
  Across the mid sea of the night,

There comes no voice; I hear no word!
  But in my soul dawns something bright:—
  There is no sea, no foe to fight!
Thy heart and mine beat one accord:
I need no voice from thee, O Lord,
  Across the mid sea of the night.

George Macdonald

RONDEL

(After Anyte of Tegea.)

Underneath this tablet rest,
Grasshopper by autumn slain,
Since thine airy summer nest
Shivers under storm and rain.

Freely let it be confessed
Death and slumber bring thee gain;
Spared from winter's fret and pain,
Underneath this tablet rest.

Myro found thee on the plain,
Bore thee in her lawny breast,
Reared this marble tomb amain
To receive so small a guest!
Underneath this tablet rest,
Grasshopper by autumn slain.

Edmund Gosse

EARTH LOVE

If there should be a sound of song
Among the leaves when I am dead,
God grant I still may hear it sped.
And may I never pass along
Unmoved of that sweet goodlihead,
  If there should be a sound of song
  Among the leaves when I am dead.

And may I never know the wrong
Of cancelled memory of shed
Soft petals of the roses red—
If there should be a sound of song
Among the leaves when I am dead,
God grant I still may hear it sped.

John Drinkwater

RONDEL

The ways of Death are soothing and serene,
And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.
From camp and church, the fireside and the street,
She signs to come, and strife and song have been.

A summer night descending, cool and green
And dark, on daytime's dust and stress and heat,
The ways of Death are soothing and serene,
And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.

O glad and sorrowful, with triumphant mien
And hopeful faces look upon and greet
This last of all your lovers, and to meet
Her kiss, the Comforter's, your spirit lean. . . .
The ways of Death are soothing and serene.

W. E. Henley

RONDEAUS

THE RONDEAU

Your rondeau's tale must still be light—
No bugle-call to life's stern fight!
  Rather a smiling interlude
  Memorial to some transient mood
Of idle love and gala-night.

Its manner is the merest sleight
O' hand; yet therein dwells its might,
  For if the heavier touch intrude
    Your rondeau's stale.

Fragrant and fragile, fleet and bright,
And wing'd with whim, it gleams in flight
  Like April blossoms wind-pursued
  Down aisles of tangled underwood;—
Nor be too serious when you write
    Your rondeau's tale.

Don Marquis

FANCIES IN FILIGREE

—Strambotti of ALESSANDRO DE MEDICI.

XXIV

"Guarda negli occhi la nostra regina"

My Lady's Eyes Remembrance bring
Of lyttel Waves whose Wavering
Beneathe ye roving Summer Breeze
Makes scintillant hushed Summer Seas
Whenas ye Sun is vanishing.

They gladden me, as when in Spring
We sing & knowe not why we sing.
In sooth, there be noe Eyes like these
My Lady's Eyes.

Whenas their Glance is threatening
They frighten Cupid, & that King
From Florimel a-quaking flees;
But when they soften, on hys Knees
Love falls before them worshipping
My Lady's Eyes.

XLI

"Rime d'amore usar dolci e leggiadre"

Ye little Rhyme I swore last Night
To lay before ye Eyes so bright
I have long loved—& loved too well!—
So now ye Muses to compell,
& shapely Phrases to indite.

Which shall it be?—Ye Villanelle,
Ode, Triolet, Rondeau, Rondel,
Ballade, or Sonnet?—Each is hight
Ye littel Rhyme.

Yet none will aide my hapless Plight:
All little Rhymes are short & slight,
& of ye Charmes of Florimel
An Epick's Length alone can tell,—
So that of her I may not write
Ye lyttel Rhyme.

James Branch Cabell

AFTER WATTEAU

(To F. W.)

"*Embarquons-nous!*" I seem to go
Against my will. 'Neath alleys low
  I bend, and hear across the air—
  Across the stream—faint music rare,—
Whose "*cornemuse*," whose "*chalumeau*"?

Hark! was not that a laugh I know?
Who was it, hurrying, turned to show
  The galley swinging by the stair?—
    "*Embarquons-nous!*"

The silk sail flaps, light breezes blow;
Frail laces flutter, satins flow;
  You, with the love-knot in your hair,
  "*Allons, embarquons pour Cythère*";
You will not? Press her, then, Pierrot,—
    "*Embarquons-nous!*"

Austin Dobson

A GREETING

(To W. C.)

But once or twice we met, touched hands.
But to-day between us both expands
  A waste of tumbling waters wide,—
  A waste by me as yet untried,
Vague with the doubt of unknown lands.

Time like a despot speeds his sands:
A year he blots, a day he brands;
  We walked, we talked by Thamis' side
    But once or twice.

What makes a friend? What filmy strands
Are these that turn to iron bands?
  What knot is this so firmly tied
  That naught but Fate can now divide?—
Ah, these are things one understands
                But once or twice!

Austin Dobson

"WHEN BURBADGE PLAYED"

(To L. B.)

When Burbadge played, the stage was bare
Of fount and temple, tower and stair;
  Two backswords eked a battle out;
  Two supers made a rabble rout;
The Throne of Denmark was a chair!

And yet, no less, the audience there
Thrilled through all changes of Despair,
  Hope, Anger, Fear, Delight, and Doubt
                When Burbadge played!

This is the Actor's gift; to share
All moods, all passions, nor to care
  One whit for scene, so he without
  Can lead men's minds the roundabout,
Stirred as of old those hearers were
                When Burbadge played!

Austin Dobson

TO DAFFODILS

(To A. J. M.)

O yellow flowers that HERRICK sung!
O yellow flowers that danced and swung
  In WORDSWORTH's verse, and now to me,
  Unworthy, from this "pleasant lea,"
Laugh back, unchanged and ever young;—

Ah, what a text to us o'erstrung,
O'erwrought, o'erreaching, hoarse of lung,
  You teach by that immortal glee,
    O yellow flowers!

We, by the Age's œstrus stung,
Still hunt the New with eager tongue,
  Vexed ever with the Old, but ye,
  What ye have been ye still shall be,
When we are dust the dust among,
    O yellow flowers!

Austin Dobson

"O FONS BANDUSIÆ"

O babbling Spring, than glass more clear,
Worthy of wreath and cup sincere,
  To-morrow shall a kid be thine
  With swelled and sprouting brows for sign,—
Sure sign!—of loves and battles near.

Child of the race that butt and rear!
Not less, alas! his life-blood dear
  Must tinge thy cold wave crystalline,
    O babbling Spring!

Thee Sirius knows not. Thou dost cheer
With pleasant cool the plough-worn steer,—
  The wandering flock. This verse of mine
  Will rank thee one with founts divine;
Men shall thy rock and tree revere,
    O babbling Spring!

Austin Dobson

"WITH PIPE AND FLUTE"

(To E. G.)

With pipe and flute the rustic Pan
Of old made music sweet for man;
  And wonder hushed the warbling bird,
  And closer drew the calm-eyed herd,—
The rolling river slowlier ran.

Ah! would,—ah! would, a little span,
Some air of Arcady could fan
  This age of ours, too seldom stirred
        With pipe and flute!

But now for gold we plot and plan;
And from Beersheba unto Dan,
  Apollo's self might pass unheard,
  Or find the night-jar's note preferred;—
Not so it fared, when time began,
        With pipe and flute!

Austin Dobson

"FAREWELL, RENOWN!"

Farewell, Renown! Too fleeting flower,
That grows a year to last an hour;—
  Prize of the race's dust and heat,
  Too often trodden under feet,—
Why should I court your "barren dower"?

Nay;—had I Dryden's angry power,—
The thews of Ben,—the wind of Gower,—
  Not less my voice should still repeat
        "Farewell, Renown!"

Farewell!—Because the Muses' bower
Is filled with rival brows that lower;—
  Because, howe'er his pipe be sweet,
  The Bard, that "pays," must please the street;—

But most . . . because the grapes are sour,—
Farewell, Renown!

Austin Dobson

"ON LONDON STONES"

On London stones I sometimes sigh
For wider green and bluer sky;—
Too oft the trembling note is drowned
In this huge city's varied sound;—
"Pure song is country-born"—I cry.

Then comes the spring,—the months go by,
The last stray swallows seaward fly;
And I—I too!—no more am found
On London stones!

In vain!—the woods, the fields deny
That clearer strain I fain would try;
Mine is an urban Muse, and bound
By some strange law to paven ground;
Abroad she pouts;—she is not shy
On London stones!

Austin Dobson

"IN AFTER DAYS"

In after days when grasses high
O'ertop the stone where I shall lie,
Though ill or well the world adjust
My slender claim to honour'd dust,
I shall not question nor reply.

I shall not see the morning sky;
I shall not hear the night-wind sigh;
I shall be mute, as all men must
In after days!

But yet, now living, fain would I
That some one then should testify,

Saying—*He held his pen in trust*
To Art, not serving shame or lust.
Will none?—Then let my memory die
In after days!

Austin Dobson

"WHEN *FINIS* COMES"

When *Finis* comes, the Book we close,
And somewhat sadly, Fancy goes,
With backward step, from stage to stage
Of that accomplished pilgrimage . . .
The thorn lies thicker than the rose!

There is so much that no one knows,—
So much un-reached that none suppose;
What flaws! what faults!—on every page,
When *Finis* comes.

Still,—they must pass! The swift Tide flows.
Though not for all the laurel grows,
Perchance, in this be-slandered age,
The worker, mainly, wins his wage;—
And Time will sweep both friends and foes
When Finis comes!

Austin Dobson

TO AUSTIN DOBSON

AFTER HIMSELF

[Rondeau of Villon]

At sixty years, when April's face
Retrieves, as now, the winter's cold,
Where tales of other Springs are told
You keep your courtly pride of place.

Within the circle's charmèd space
You rest unchallenged, as of old,
At sixty years.

Not Time nor Silence sets its trace
On golden lyre and voice of gold;
Our Poets' Poet, still you hold
The laurels got by no man's grace—
At sixty years.

Sir Owen Seaman

RONDEL

Kissing her hair I sat against her feet,
Wove and unwove it, wound and found it sweet,
Made fast therewith her hands, drew down her eyes,
Deep as deep flowers and dreamy like dim skies;
With her own tresses bound and found her fair,
Kissing her hair.

Sleep were no sweeter than her face to me,
Sleep of cold sea-bloom under the cold sea;
What pain could get between my face and hers?
What new sweet thing would love not relish worse?
Unless, perhaps, white death had kissed me there,
Kissing her hair?

Algernon Charles Swinburne

RONDEAU

His poisoned shafts, that fresh he dips
In juice of plants that no bee sips,
He takes, and with his bow renown'd
Goes out upon his hunting ground,
Hanging his quiver at his hips.

He draws them one by one, and clips
Their heads between his finger-tips,
And looses with a twanging sound
His poisoned shafts.

But if a maiden with her lips
Suck from the wound the blood that drips,
And drink the poison from the wound,
The simple remedy is found
That of their deadly terror strips
His poisoned shafts.

Robert Bridges

RONDEAU

For too much love 'tis soothly said a
There is no cure will stand in stead: a
Deadly the baits that first decoy; b
And where we look to find our joy b
Is all our pain and sorrow bred. a

Think not thyself the first misled! a
Many ere thou have fought and bled, a
Or pined away of slow annoy b
For too much love.

And who has not the old tale read, a
Of how the flower of Hellas shed a
Their hearts' blood on the plains of Troy, b
And that fair city did destroy, b
And laid her heroes with the dead a
For too much love?

Robert Bridges

RONDEAU

If Love should faint, and half decline
Below the fit meridian sign,
And shorn of all his golden dress,
His royal state and loveliness,
Be no more worth a heart like thine,
Let not thy nobler passion pine,
But with a charity divine,
Let Memory ply her soft address
If Love should faint;

And oh! this laggard heart of mine,
Like some halt pilgrim stirred with wine,
  Shall ache in pity's dear distress,
  Until the balms of thy caress
To work the finished cure combine
  If Love should faint.

Edmund Gosse

FORTUNATE LOVE

FIRST SIGHT

When first we met the nether world was white,
  And on the steel-blue ice before her bower
  I skated in the sunrise for an hour,
Till all the grey horizon, gulphed in light,
Was red against the bare boughs black as night;
  Then suddenly her sweet face like a flower,
  Enclosed in sables from the frost's dim power,
Shone at her casement, and flushed burning bright
  When first we met!

My skating being done, I loitered home,
  And sought that day to lose her face again;
But Love was weaving in his golden loom
  My story up with hers, and all in vain
  I strove to loose the threads he spun amain,
  When first we met.

Edmund Gosse

EXPECTATION

When flower-time comes and all the woods are gay,
  When linnets chirrup and the soft winds blow,
  Adown the winding river I will row,
And watch the merry maidens tossing hay,

And troops of children shouting in their play,
  And with my thin oars flout the fallen snow
  Of heavy hawthorn-blossom as I go,—
And shall I see my love at fall of day
  When flower-time comes?

Ah, yes! for by the border of the stream
  She binds red roses to a trim alcove,
And I may fade into her summer-dream
Of musing upon love,—nay, even seem
  To be myself the very god of love,
  When flower-time comes!

Edmund Gosse

IN THE GRASS

Oh! flame of grass, shot upward from the earth,
  Keen with a thousand quivering sunlit fires,
  Green with the sap of satisfied desires
And sweet fulfilment of your sad pale birth,
Behold! I clasp you as a lover might,
  Roll on you, bathing in the noonday sun,
  And, if it might be, I would fain be one
With all your odour, mystery and light,
  Oh, flame of grass!

For here, to chasten my untimely gloom,
  My lady took my hand, and spoke my name;
  The sun was on her gold hair like a flame;
The bright wind smote her forehead like perfume;
  The daisies darkened at her feet; she came,
As Spring comes, scattering incense on your bloom
  Oh, flame of grass!

Edmund Gosse

BY THE WELL

Hot hands that yearn to touch her flower-like face,
  With fingers spread, I set you like a weir
  To stem this ice-cold stream in its career,—
And chill your pulses there a little space;

Brown hands, what right have you to claim the grace
  To touch her head so infinitely dear?
  Learn courteously to wait and to revere,
Lest haply ye be found in sorry case,
                Hot hands that yearn!

But if ye pluck her flowers at my behest,
  And bring her crystal water from the well,
And bend a bough for shade when she will rest,
  And if she find you fain and teachable,
  That flower-like face, perchance, ah! who can tell
In your embrace may some sweet day be pressed,
                Hot hands that yearn!

Edmund Gosse

A GARDEN-PIECE

Among the flowers of summer-time she stood,
  And underneath the films and blossoms shone
  Her face, like some pomegranate strangely grown
To ripe magnificence in solitude;
The wanton winds, deft whisperers, had strewed
  Her shoulders with her shining hair outblown,
  And dyed her breast with many a changing tone
Of silvery green, and all the hues that brood
                Among the flowers;

She raised her arm up for her dove to know
  That he might preen him on her lovely head;
But I, unseen, and rising on tiptoe,
Bowed over the rose-barrier, and lo!
  Touched not her arm, but kissed her lips instead,
                Among the flowers!

Edmund Gosse

LOVER'S QUARREL

Beside the stream and in the alder-shade,
  Love sat with us one dreamy afternoon,
  When nightingales and roses made up June,
And saw the red light and the amber fade

Under the canopy the willows made,
  And watched the rising of the hollow moon,
  And listened to the water's gentle tune,
And was as silent as she was, sweet maid,
                Beside the stream;

Till with "Farewell!" he vanished from our sight,
  And in the moonlight down the glade afar
  His light wings glimmered like a falling star;
Then ah! she took the left path, I the right,
And now no more we sit by noon or night
                Beside the stream!

Edmund Gosse

UNDER THE APPLE-TREE

Against her breast I set my head, and lay
  Beneath the summer fruitage of a tree,
  Whose boughs last spring had borne for her and me
The fleeting blossom of a doubtful day;
That rose and white had tasted swift decay,
  And now the swelling fruits of certainty
  Hung there like pale green lamps, and fair to see,
And I was strong to dream the hours away
                Against her breast:

Her satins rustled underneath my head,
  Stirred by the motions of her perfect heart,
But she was silent, till at last she said,—
While all her countenance flushed rosy-red,—
  "Dear love! oh! stay forever where thou art,
                Against my breast!"

Edmund Gosse

"IN LOVE'S DISPORT"

In love's disport, gay bubbles blown
On summer winds light-freighted flown:

A child intent upon delight
The painted spheres would keep in sight,
Dissolved too soon in worlds unknown.

Lo! from the furnace mouth hath grown
Fair shapes, as frail; with jewelled zone,
Clear globes where fate may read aright
In love's disport.

O frail as fair! though in the white
Of flameful heat with force to fight,
Art thou by careless hands cast down
Or killed, when frozen hearts disown
The children born of love and light.
In love's disport.

Walter Crane

"WHAT MAKES THE WORLD?"

What makes the world, Sweetheart, reply?
A space of lawn, a strip of sky,
The bread and wine of fellowship,
The cup of life for love to sip,
A glass of dreams in Hope's blue eye;

So let the days and hours go by,
Let Fortune flout, and Fame deny,
With feathered heel shall fancy trip—
What makes the world?

The wealth that never in the grip
Of blighting greed shall heedless slip,—
When bought and sold is liberty,
With worth of life and love gone by—
What makes the world?

Walter Crane

RONDEAU

"Lady, I offer nothing—I am yours."
—*Colombe's Birthday.*

Wilt thou have words, when silence deep
So sweet a secret still may keep,
And breathe into thy soul from mine
A wordless message so divine
It makes the heart of music leap?—

Such silence like celestial sleep,
Hath visions, where, beyond the steep
Dark ways of words, all things are thine:—
Wilt thou have words?

Dost thou then doubt, or fear to reap
The ripened harvest?—Let me sweep
All doubts away: ask thou no sign—
Look in the eyes that now incline
Their silence tow'rd thee! Dost thou weep?
Wilt thou have words?

Annie Matheson

"WITHOUT ONE KISS"

Without one kiss she's gone away,
And stol'n the brightness out of day;
With scornful lips and haughty brow
She's left me melancholy now,
In spite of all that I could say.

And so, to guess as best I may
What angered her, awhile I stay
Beneath this blown acacia bough,
Without one kiss;

Yet all my wildered brain can pay
My questioning, is but to pray

Persuasion may my speech endow,
And Love may never more allow
My injured sweet to sail away
Without one kiss.

Charles G. D. Roberts

VIS EROTIS

(*Rondeau*)

Love that holdeth firm in fee
Many a lord of many a land,
From thy thraldom few would flee;
Wide the wondrous potency
Of thy heart-enchaining hand.

Since on shining Cyprian sand
Did thy mother, Venus, stand,
Man and maid have worshipped thee,
Love.

They that scorn thy slaves to be,
Oft before thy throne, unmanned,
Grant thy great supremacy;
Hear my prayer, O Monarch, and
Let my lady smile on me,
Love.

Clinton Scollard

MIGHT LOVE BE BOUGHT

Might Love be bought, I were full fain
My all to give thy love to gain.
Yet would such getting profit naught;
Possession with keen fears were fraught,
Would make even love's blisses vain.

For who could tell what god might deign
His golden treasures round thee rain,
Till ruin on my hopes were brought,
Might Love be bought.

Better a pensioner remain
On thy dear grace, since to attain
  To worthiness in vain I sought.
  Thy kindness hath assurance wrought
Could never be between us twain
        Might Love be bought.

Arlo Bates

IN THY CLEAR EYES

In thy clear eyes, fairest, I see
  Sometimes of love a transient glow;
But ere my heart assured may be,
With cold disdain thou mockest me:
  Hope fades as songs to silence flow.

Ah! most bewitching, mocking she,
  Fairer than poet's dream may show,
The glance of scorn how can I dree
        In thy clear eyes?

  Life is so brief, and to and fro,
Like thistledown above the lea,
  Fly on poor days; why then so slow
  To bend from pride? Let us bliss know
Ere age the light dims ruthlessly
        In thy clear eyes.

Arlo Bates

RONDEAU

One of these days, my lady whispereth,
A day made beautiful with Summer's breath,
Our feet shall cease from these divided ways,
Our lives shall leave the distance and the haze
And flower together in a mingling wreath.
No pain shall part us then, no grief amaze,
No doubt dissolve the glory of our gaze;
Earth shall be heaven for us twain, she saith,
    One of these days.

Ah, love, my love! Athwart how many Mays
The old hope lures us with its long delays!
How many winters waste our fainting faith!
I wonder, will it come this side of death,
With any of the old sun in its rays,
One of these days?

John Payne

IF LOVE COULD LAST*

If love could last, I'd spend my all
And think the price were yet too small
To buy his light upon my way,
His sun to turn my night to day,
His cheer whatever might befall.

Were I his slave, or he my thrall,
No terrors should my heart appal;
I'd fear no wreckage or dismay
If love could last.

Heaven's lilies grow up white and tall,
But warm within earth's garden wall
With roses red and soft winds play—
Ah, might I gather them to-day!
My hands should never let them fall,
If love *could* last.

Louise Chandler Moulton

RONDEAU

To Elaine

For you alone how shall I write
A message from all others' sight
Concealed, though every passer took
His glance within this little book,
Where'er it wing its wandering flight?

I would not rhyme you wishes trite
Of health and wealth as others might;
  Your praise demands a secret nook
    For you alone!

There, served by one rapt acolyte,
A lamp shall show, in Time's despite,
  Its flame by winter winds unshook—
  Can you divine where you must look
To see this shrine that glows so bright
    For you alone?

Gareth Marsh Stanton

ALL LOVELY THINGS

All lovely things conspire to greet
My lady: daisies at her feet
  Sprang white and wistfully implored
  Her plucking; and with one accord
The sunsets for her smile compete.

The stars, in many a silver fleet,
Set sail each night in hopes to meet
  Her eyes, that graciously reward
    All lovely things.

All gay and gentle thoughts entreat
Her favour and approval sweet;
  All sorrow, when to her outpoured,
  Is by her sympathy restored:
She finishes and makes complete
    All lovely things.

Christopher Morley

RONDEAU

Ah, Manon, say, why is it we
Are one and all so fain of thee?

Thy rich red beauty debonnaire
In very truth is not more fair,
Than the shy grace and purity
That clothe the maiden maidenly;
Her gray eyes shine more tenderly
And not less bright than thine her hair,
    Ah, Manon, say!
Expound, I pray, the mystery
Why wine-stained lip and languid eye,
And most unsaintly Mænad air,
Should move us more than all the rare
White roses of virginity?
    Ah, Manon, say!

Ernest Dowson

TO TAMARIS

It is enough to love you. Let me be
Only an influence, as the wandering sea
  Answers the moon that yet foregoes to shine;
  Only a sacrifice, as in a shrine
The lamp burns on where dead eyes cannot see;
Only a hope unknown, withheld from thee,
Yet ever like a petrel plaintively,
  Just following on to life's far twilight line,
                It is enough.

Go where you will, I follow. *You* are free.
Alone, unloved, to all eternity
  I track that chance no virtue can divine,
  When pitiful, loving, with fond hands in mine,
You say: "True heart, here take your will of me,
                It is enough."

Theo. Marzials

O SCORN ME NOT

O scorn me not, although my worth be slight,
Although the stars alone can match thy light,

Although the wind alone can mock thy grace,
And thy glass only show so fair a face—
Yet—let me find some favour in thy sight.

The proud stars will not bend from their chill height,
Nor will the wind thy faithfulness requite.
Thy mirror gives thee but a cold embrace.
O scorn me not.

My lamp is feeble, but by day or night
It shall not wane, and, but for thy delight,
My footsteps shall not for a little space
Forego the echo of thy tender pace,—
I would so serve and guard thee if I might.
O scorn me not.

Cosmo Monkhouse

MY LOVE TO ME

My love to me is always kind:
She neither storms, nor is she pined;
She does not plead with tears or sighs,
But gentle words and soft replies—
Dear earnests of the thought behind.

They say the little god is blind,
They do not count him quite too wise;
Yet he, somehow, could bring and bind
My love to me.

And sweetest nut hath sourest rind?
It may be so; but she I prize
Is even lovelier in mine eyes
Than good and gracious to my mind.
I bless the fortune that consigned
My love to me.

W. E. Henley

IF I WERE KING

If I were king—ah, love, if I were king!
What tributary nations would I bring
To stoop before your sceptre and to swear
Allegiance to your lips and eyes and hair.
Beneath your feet what treasures I would fling:—
The stars should be your pearls upon a string,
The world a ruby for your finger ring,
And you should have the sun and moon to wear
If I were king.

Let then wild dreams and wilder words take wing,
Deep in the woods I hear a shepherd sing
A simple ballad to a sylvan air,
Of love that ever finds your face more fair.
I could not give you any godlier thing
If I were king.

Justin Huntley McCarthy

IF I WERE KING

If I were king, my pipe should be premier.
The skies of time and chance are seldom clear,
  We would inform them all with bland blue weather.
Delight alone would need to shed a tear,
  For dream and deed should war no more together.

Art should aspire, yet ugliness be dear;
  Beauty, the shaft, should speed with wit for feather;
And love, sweet love, should never fall to sere,
  If I were king.

But politics should find no harbour near;
  The Philistine should fear to slip his tether;
Tobacco should be duty free, and beer;
  In fact, in room of this, the age of leather,
An age of gold all radiant should appear,
  If I were king.

W. E. Henley

LOVE IN LONDON

In London town men love and hate,
And find Death tragic soon or late,
  Just in the old unreasoning way,
  As if they breathed the warmer day
In Athens when the gods were great.

Mine is the town by Thames's spate,
And so it chanced I found my fate,
  One of my fates, that is to say—
                In London town.

The whole world comes to those who wait;
Mine came and went with one year's date.
  Pity it made so short a stay!
  The sweetest face, the sweetest sway
That ever Love did consecrate
                In London town.

Justin Huntley McCarthy

RONDEAUX OF CITIES

I.

(Rondeau à la Boston)

A cultured mind! Before I speak
The words, sweet maid, to tinge thy cheek
  With blushes of the nodding rose
  That on thy breast in beauty blows,
I prithee satisfy my freak.
Canst thou read Latin and eke Greek?
Dost thou for knowledge pine and peak?
  Hast thou, in short, as I suppose,
                A cultured mind?

Some men require a maiden meek
Enough to eat at need the leek;

Some lovers crave a classic nose,
A liquid eye, or faultless pose;
I none of these, I only seek
A cultured mind.

II.

(Rondeau à la New York)

A pot of gold! O mistress fair,
With eyes of brown that pass compare,
Ere I on bended knee express
The love which you already guess,
I fain would ask a small affair.

Hast thou, my dear, an ample share
Of this world's goods? Wilt thy papa *
Disgorge, to gild our blessedness,
A pot of gold?

Some swains for mental graces care;
Some fall a prey to golden hair;
I am not blind, I will confess,
To intellect or comeliness;
Still let these go beside, *ma chère*,
A pot of gold.

III.

(Rondeau à la Philadelphia)

A pedigree! Ah, lovely jade!
Whose tresses mock the raven's shade,
Before I free this aching breast,
I want to set my mind at rest;
'Tis best to call a spade a spade.

What was thy father ere he made
His fortune? Was he smeared with trade,

* Pronounced *papaire*.

Or does he boast an ancient crest—
A pedigree?

Brains and bright eyes are overweighed,
For wits grow dull and beauties fade;
And riches, though a welcome guest,
Oft jar the matrimonial nest;
I kiss her lips who holds displayed
A pedigree.

IV.

(Rondeau à la Baltimore)

A pretty face! O maid divine,
Whose vowels flow as soft as wine,
Before I say upon the rack
The words I never can take back,
A moment meet my glance with thine.

Say, art thou fair? Is the incline
Of that sweet nose an aquiline?
Hast thou, despite unkind attack,
A pretty face?

Some sigh for wisdom; Three, not nine,
The Graces were. I won't repine
For want of pedigree, or lack
Of gold to banish Care the black,
If I can call forever mine
A pretty face.

Robert Grant

AT HOME

At home to-night, alone with Dot,
I loaf my soul and care not what
In worlds beyond may come or go.
Four walls, a roof, to brave the snow,
Suffice to bound this Eden spot.

Dot has her sewing things; I've got
My pipe, a glass of something hot
And Dot herself; The world's aglow,
At home to-night.

As lovers in some golden plot
The poet weaves of Camelot
We feel apart from earth. We know
The servant in the hall below
Will say to all who call we're not
At home to-night.

T. A. Daly

HER SPINNING-WHEEL

Her spinning-wheel she deftly guides,
As by the homely hearth she bides;
Within a quaint, old straight-backed chair,
A damsel with a modest air,
Over the treadle swift, presides.

But through the years Time onward glides,
Careless if good or ill betides;
Nor will his ruthless changes spare
Her spinning wheel.

Another cycle he provides,
Though censor carps and critic chides,
The modern maid, fearless and fair,
Daintily gay and debonair;
Trimly equipped, triumphant rides
Her spinning wheel.

Carolyn Wells

FOR A BIRTHDAY *

At two years old the world he sees
Must seem expressly made to please!

* From *The Rocking Horse* by Christopher Morley. Copyright 1919, George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

Such new-found words and games to try,
Such sudden mirth, he knows not why,
  So many curiosities!

As life about him, by degrees
Discloses all its pageantries
He watches with approval shy
  At two years old.

With wonders tired he takes his ease
At dusk, upon his mother's knees:
A little laugh, a little cry,
Put toys to bed, then "seepy-bye"—
The world is made of such as these
  At two years old.

Christopher Morley

A FATHER SPEAKS

Our son and heir grows like a tree
In Spring when the first wave of glee
  Rushes across the oldest hills
  And laughs along the boughs, and fills
The timidest twigs with energy.

The boy within me leaps to see
This echoing laugh of gayety
  Bridging the years; its vigor thrills
    Our son and heir. . . .

I dare not think how much may be
Growing in him. I know that he,
  Facing the world's perpetual ills,
  Must rise above its whims and wills.
He is, more than mere life to me,
    Our sun and air!

Louis Untermeyer

MAIDEN MEDITATION

(A Rondeau)

Myrtilla thinks! be still, oh, breeze,
Ye birds, cease warbling in the trees,
  Ye wavelets, your light plash subdue,
  Ye turtle-doves, neglect to coo,
And silent be, ye buzzing bees,

Lest even your soft harmonies
  Intrude upon such thoughts as these,
  For though astonishing, 'tis true,
    Myrtilla thinks!

Plunged in profoundest reveries,
Fair visions her rapt fancy sees;
  So undecided what to do—
  Shall she wear pink? shall she wear blue?
Amid her pretty fineries
    Myrtilla thinks!

Carolyn Wells

SUB ROSA

Under the rows of gas-jets bright,
Bathed in a blazing river of light,
  A regal beauty sits; above her
  The butterflies of fashion hover,
And burn their wings, and take to flight.

Mark you her pure complexion,—white
Though flush may follow flush. Despite
  Her blush, the lily I discover
                Under the rose.

All compliments to her are trite;
She has adorers left and right;

And I confess, here, under cover
Of secrecy, I too—I love her!
Say naught; she knows it not. 'Tis quite
Under the rose.

Brander Matthews

AN APRIL FOOL

(Rondeau)

An April Fool, I swear, is one
Who trusts the shade or trusts the sun,
Or aught that's in an April day.
Or—put it in another way—
Who trusts a woman. I trust none.

You do, Sir Romeo? Well begun!
Yes, I myself once thought it fun
For woman's sake your part to play—
An April Fool.

By stern experience taught to shun
The web by witching glances spun,
Deliverance from their toils I pray.
I'm safe in scorn—what's that you say?
I'd be—*I?*—if I didn't run—
An April Fool?

Henry Cuyler Bunner

THAT NEW YEAR'S CALL

(Rondeau)

That New Year's Call—the thirty-first.
And thirty, even, I had cursed,
And marked off on my weary list—
And knit my brow and clenched my fist:
I'd cut as many as I durst.

I'd saved till next to last the worst,
And there upon my sight there burst
  A vision. Well, I'd not have missed
    That New Year's Call.

I had been bored; but now she pursed
Her rosy lips, as I rehearsed
  The things so often said—the gist
  I don't recall. 'Twas quite a twist—
The situation was reversed
    That New Year's Call.

Henry Cuyler Bunner

SAINT VALENTINE

(Rondeau)

St. Valentine! well hast thou said,
(Or some one said it in thy stead,)
  That of our fancies we may frame,
  In verses signed with ne'er a name,
A ladder up to Love to tread.

Sweet saint, thou hadst a largish head,
And though thou never couldst have wed,
  I think thou flirtedst all the same—
    St. Valentine.

'Tis not for nothing I have spread
Myself on paper, sealed with red,
  Red wax—a cupid taking aim.
  I'm sure she'll know from whom it came,
If o'er it be thy blessing shed,
    St. Valentine.

Henry Cuyler Bunner

AT PEEP OF DAWN

(Rondeau)

At peep of dawn the daffodil
That slumbers 'neath the grassy hill,
  Greets smilingly, with lifted head,
  The rosy Morn's oncoming tread,
The thrush sings matins by the rill.

The swallows from the ruined mill
Go coursing through the air, and fill
  The sky with songs till then unsaid
                At peep of dawn.

No harbinger of day is still.
With pipe new-tuned and merry trill
  The lark uprises from her bed
  'Mong grasses wet with dews unshed,
And puts to shame the whip-poor-will
                At peep of dawn.

Clinton Scollard

IN VISIONSHIRE

In Visionshire the sky is blue,
  And all the things I meant to do,
  And all the joys I might have missed
  And all the lips I might have kissed
Wait for me, ever fresh and new!

My unwrit song is sung there, too,
  And there my dearest dreams come true—
Ay, more dreams than my heart has wist
                In Visionshire!

For roses I shall trade my rue,
And, wandering those gardens through,

Shall find the pathway as I list
Where I may keep that old, old tryst
That long ago I made with you
In Visionshire!

Edwin Meade Robinson

RONDEAUX OF THE GALLERIES

Camelot

In Camelot how grey and green
The Damsels dwell, how sad their teen,
In Camelot how green and grey
The melancholy poplars sway.
I wis I wot not what they mean
Or wherefore, passionate and lean,
The maidens mope their loves between,
Not seeming to have much to say,
In Camelot.
Yet there hath armour goodly sheen
The blossoms in the apple treen,
(To spell the Camelotian way)
Show fragrant through the doubtful day,
And Master's work is often seen
In Camelot!

Philistia

Philistia! Maids in muslin white
With flannelled oarsmen oft delight
To drift upon thy streams, and float
In Salter's most luxurious boat;
In buff and boots the cheery knight
Returns (quite safe) from Naseby fight;
Thy humblest folks are clean and bright,
Thou still must win the public vote,
Philistia!
Observe the High Church curate's coat,
The realistic hansom note!

Ah, happy land untouched of blight,
Smirks, Bishops, Babies, left and right,
We know thine every charm by rote,
Philistia!

Andrew Lang

WITH STRAWBERRIES

With strawberries we filled a tray,
And then we drove away, away
Along the links beside the sea,
Where wave and wind were light and free,
And August felt as fresh as May.

And where the springy turf was gay
With thyme and balm and many a spray
Of wild roses, you tempted me
With strawberries!

A shadowy sail, silent and grey,
Stole like a ghost across the bay;
But none could hear me ask my fee,
And none could know what came to be.
Can sweethearts *all* their thirst allay
With strawberries?

W. E. Henley

"VIOLET"

Violet, delicate, sweet,
Down in the deep of the wood,
Hid in thy still retreat,
Far from the sound of the street,
Man and his merciless mood:—

Safe from the storm and the heat,
Breathing of beauty and good
Fragrantly, under thy hood
Violet.

Beautiful maid, discreet,
Where is the mate that is meet,
  Meet for thee—strive as he could—
Yet will I kneel at thy feet,
  Fearing another one should,
                Violet!

Cosmo Monkhouse

IN BEECHEN SHADE

In beechen shade the hours are sweet,
By mist-veiled morn or noonday heat
  (And sweeter still when daylight dies)
  So soft the wandering streamlet sighs
In passage musical and fleet.

Full drowsily the white lambs bleat,
And tinkling bell-notes faintly beat
  The languid air where Lacon lies
                In beechen shade.

And still, when day and even meet;
Selene strays with golden feet,
  That gleam along the low blue skies
  And paceth slow, with dreaming eyes
That seek the shepherd's dim retreat
                'Mid beechen shade.

Graham R. Tomson

AMONG MY BOOKS

Among my books—what rest is there
From wasting woes! what balm for care!
  If ills appal or clouds hang low,
  And drooping dim the fleeting show,
I revel still in visions rare.

At will I breathe the classic air,
The wanderings of Ulysses share;

Or see the plume of Bayard flow
Among my books.

Whatever face the world may wear—
If Lilian has no smile to spare,
For others let her beauty blow,
Such favours I can well forego;
Perchance forget the frowning fair
Among my books

Samuel Minturn Peck

TO R. L. S.

Dear R. L. S., whose books each night
We used to read by candle-light,
These many years your body lies
Under the blue Samoan skies,
But still your words ring warm and bright.

In these poor rhymes, however slight,
I fain would tell you, if I might,
Your words brought gladness to *her* eyes,
Dear R. L. S.

The magic you knew how to write
Evoked her laughter of delight:
With gratitude which rhyme denies
Full utterance—do not despise—
To You, to Her, I this indite,
Dear R. L. S.

Christopher Morley

TO CATULLUS

A Rondel

Laughter and tears to you the gods once gave,
Those silver tears upon your brother's grave,

And golden laughter in your lady's bower,
And silver-gold in your love's bitter hour.
You showed us, burdened with our hopes and fears,
Laughter and tears.

Poor tears that fell upon the thirsty sands,
Poor laughter stifled with ungentle hands,
Poor heart that was so sweet to laugh and cry,
Your joyful, mournful songs shall never die,
But show us still across the shadowing years
Laughter and tears.

E. A. Mackintosh, M. C.

WHEN SHAKESPEARE LAUGHED *

When Shakespeare laughed, the fun began!
Even the tavern barmaids ran
To choke in secret, and unbent
A lace, to ease their merriment.
The Mermaid rocked to hear the man.

Then Ben his aching girth would span,
And roar above his pasty pan,
"Avast there, Will, for I am spent!"
When Shakespeare laughed.

I'faith, let him be grave who can
When Falstaff, Puck and Caliban
In one explosive jest are blent.
The boatman on the river lent
An ear to hear the mirthful clan
When Shakespeare laughed.

Christopher Morley

* From *The Rocking Horse* by Christopher Morley. Copyright 1919, George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

WITH PIPE AND BOOK

With Pipe and Book at close of day,
O! what is sweeter, mortal, say;
  It matters not what book on knee,
  Old Izaak or the Odyssey,
It matters not meerschaum or clay.

And though one's eyes will dream astray,
And lips forget to sue or sway,
It is "enough to merely Be,"
    With Pipe and Book.

What though our modern skies be grey,
As bards aver, I will not pray
  For "soothing Death" to succour me,
  But ask thus much, O Fate, of thee,—
A little longer here to stay
    With Pipe and Book.

Richard Le Gallienne

THE OLD AND THE NEW

The Old Year goes down-hill so slow
And silent that he seems to know
  The mighty march of time, foretelling
  His departure; to his eyelids welling
Come tears of bitter pain and woe.

The lusty blast can scarce forego
His cape about his ears to blow,
  As feebly to his final dwelling
        The Old Year goes!

Within the belfry, row on row,
The bells are swinging to and fro;
  Now joyfully the chimes are swelling—
  Now solemn and few the notes are knelling—

For here the New Year comes:—and lo!
The Old Year goes!

Brander Matthews

THE NEW YEAR

The ships go down to take the sea.
Who seeks the dawn-pale mystery
That lies beyond the violet bays?
What masts shall dip into the haze,
Slip through, to where the sea-lights be?

Oh, valiant young explorers we!
Of the dim seas hope makes us free:
Into the dawn-gray water-ways
The ships go down.

And none may know for what far quay
Their sails are set, or what their fee.
Some bear rich freights through golden days;
Some come to where the dim sea sways
And breaks, and, vanquished utterly,
The ships go down.

Rose Macaulay

OLD YEAR

The old sea-ways send up their tide;
The battered ships to harbour ride.
In the deep seas beyond the bar,
Where the great winds and waters are,
The drifting ships have dropped their pride:

When for the morning seas they plied,
Who but young Hope should be their guide,
To steer them through the rocks that scar
The old sea-ways?

Into the port they reel and slide,
So for a little space abide,
  Waiting the gleam of the dawn-star
  To seek new waters, strange and far,
But no more shall their keels divide
  The old sea-ways.

Rose Macaulay

SLEEP

O happy sleep! that bear'st upon thy breast
The blood-red poppy of enchanting rest,
  Draw near me through the stillness of this place
  And let thy low breath move across my face,
As faint winds move above a poplar's crest.

The broad seas darken slowly in the west;
The wheeling sea-birds call from nest to nest;
  Draw near and touch me, leaning out of space,
  O happy Sleep!

There is no sorrow hidden or confess'd,
There is no passion uttered or suppress'd,
  Thou canst not for a little while efface;
  Enfold me in thy mystical embrace,
Thou sovereign gift of God, most sweet, most blest,
  O happy Sleep!

Ada Louise Martin

THE GODS ARE DEAD

The gods are dead? Perhaps they are! Who knows?
  Living at least in Lempriere undeleted,
The wise, the fair, the awful, the jocose,
  Are one and all, I like to think, retreated
In some still land of lilacs and the rose.

Once high they sat, and high o'er earthy shows
  With sacrificial dance and song were greeted,
Once . . . long ago: but now the story goes,
  The gods are dead.

It must be true. The world a world of prose,
  Full-crammed with facts, in science swathed and sheeted,
Nods in a stertorous after-dinner doze.
Plangent and sad, in every wind that blows
  Who will may hear the sorry words repeated—
  The gods are dead.

W. E. Henley

THE GATES OF HORN

The Gates of Horn are dull of hue
(If all our wise men tell us true).
  No songs, they say, nor perfumed air
  Shall greet the wistful pilgrim there,
No leaves are green, no skies are blue.

Yet he who will may find a clue
(Mid shadows steeped in opal dew)
  To seek, and see them passing fair,
  The Gates of Horn.

The man that goes not wreathed with rue,
Right lovely shapes his smile shall sue,
  With red rose-garlands in their hair
  And garments gay with gold and vair,
Full fain to meet him trooping through
  The Gates of Horn.

Graham R. Tomson

WHAT IS TO COME

What is to come we know not. But we know
That what has been was good—was good to show,

Better to hide, and best of all to bear.
We are the masters of the days that were:
We have lived, we have loved, we have suffered—even so.

Shall we not take the ebb who had the flow?
Life was our friend. Now, if it be our foe—
Dear, though it break and spoil us!—need we care
What is to come?

Let the great winds their worst and wildest blow,
Or the gold weather round us mellow slow:
We have fulfilled ourselves, and we can dare
And we can conquer, though we may not share
In the rich quiet of the afterglow
What is to come.

W. E. Henley

BEYOND THE NIGHT

Beyond the night no withered rose
Shall mock the later bud that blows,
Nor lily blossom e'er shall blight,
But all shall gleam more pure and white
Than starlight on the Arctic snows.

Sigh not when daylight dimmer grows,
And life a turbid river flows,
For all is sweetness—all is light
Beyond the night.

Oh, haste, sweet hour that no man knows;
Uplift us from our cumbering woes
Where joy and peace shall crown the right,
And perished hopes shall blossom bright—
To aching hearts bring sweet repose
Beyond the night.

Samuel Minturn Peck

O WINDS THAT WAIL

O winds that wail in sombre skies,
When day has closed his weary eyes;
What shadow thoughts do you suggest
With your perpetual unrest
Moaning nocturnal mysteries?

Dim faces, ancient memories,
Deeds we had fashioned otherwise,
Words we had stifled unexpressed;
O winds that wail!

Past strivings and futilities,
And half-forgotten agonies;
Such are the messages you bring,
With your insistent whispering
And indeterminable sighs,
O winds that wail!

Arthur Compton-Rickett

LES MORTS VONT VITE *

Les morts vont vite! Ay, for a little space
We miss and mourn them, fallen from their place;
To take our portion in their rest are fain;
But by-and-by, having wept, press on again,
Perchance to win their laurels in the race.

What man would find the old in the new love's face?
Seek on the fresher lips the old kisses' trace,
For withered roses newer blooms disdain?
Les morts vont vite!

But when disease brings thee in piteous case,
Thou shalt thy dead recall, and thy ill grace

To them for whom remembrance plead in vain.
Then, shuddering, think, while thy bed-fellow Pain
Clasps thee with arms that cling like Death's embrace:
Les morts vont vite!

Henry Cuyler Bunner

LES MORTS VONT VITE

Les morts vont vite: The dead go fast!
So runs the motto France has cast.
To nature man must pay his debt;
Despite all struggle, despite all fret,
He journeys swift to the future vast.

It needs no ghost from out the past,
To make mere mortals stand aghast,—
To make them dream of death—and yet
Les morts vont vite.

Although the sails (bellowed by blast)
Of Charon's bark may strain the mast—
The dead are not dead while we regret;
The dead are not dead till we forget;
But true the motto, or first or last:
Les morts vont vite.

Brander Matthews

RONDEAU: OH, IN MY DREAMS I FLEW!

Why not, my Soul? Why not fare forth, and fly
Free as thy dreams were free!—with them to vie;
There thou wert bold—thou knew'st not doubt nor fear,
Thy will was there thy deed—ah, why not here?
Thou need'st but faith to carry thee on high!

A thousand things that others dare not try—
A thousand hopes thy heart doth prophesy;
Thou knowest the master-word, oh, speak it clear!
Why not, my soul?

Let not this world of little things deny;
Break thy frail bonds, and in those dreams rely!
  Trust to the counsels of that other sphere;
  Let that night's vision in the day appear;
Walk forth upon the water—wing the sky!
                Why not, my soul?

Gelett Burgess

TO DEATH, OF HIS LADY

(François Villon)

Death, of thee do I make my moan,
  Who hadst my lady away from me,
  Nor wilt assuage thine enmity
Till with her life thou hast mine own;
For since that hour my strength has flown.
  Lo! what wrong was her life to thee,
                Death?

Two we were, and the heart was one;
  Which now being dead, dead I must be,
  Or seem alive as lifelessly
As in the choir the painted stone,
                Death!

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

GRAVE GALLANTRY

After CHARLES GARNIER

I

My rival Death is fashioned amorously;—
No caliph boasts more comely wives than he,
For whom crowned Cleopatra reft the snare
Of careful-eyed Octavius, and—less fair
Than she, but lovely still—Leucothoë,

And Atalanta, and Antigonê,
Loosed virgin zones. . . . What need hadst thou to be
Desirous then of this girl's lips and hair,
My rival Death?

What need hadst thou likewise of Dorothy!
What need of that which was all life to me!
What need, lascivious Death, that she forswear
Fond oaths to me—fond oaths made otherwhere—
In thy lank arms, and leave me friends with thee,
My rival, Death!

II

Had she divined how many virelais
Have feebly parodied some piercing phase
Of love for her whom love lacked might to claim—
How many rhymes have marshalled frail and lame,
Yet fervent-hearted, to avouch her praise,—
Such pity had been mine as well repays
Drear years of waiting.—Ey, in kindlier days
Compassion might have worn some kinglier name
Had she divined.

Now that may never be; divergent ways
Allured; and all is ended; and naught betrays
Dead cheeks to kindle, now, with livelier flame
For aught I utter. . . . Yet it were no shame
To dream a little on her softening gaze
Had she divined.

III

That she is dead breeds no uncouth despair,
However,—as death bred when men would bear
A glove upon their helms, and slay or sing
In honor of its giver, hazarding
Life and life's aims because a girl was fair. . .
Grotesque their liege-lord seems when we compare
That Cupidling who spurs me to declare

Sedate regret, in rhythmic sorrowing
That she is dead.

Nay, he is much the punier of the pair,—
My little lord, who dreads lest critics stare
Too pointedly,—a flimsy fainéant king;—
Yet hearts may crack without crude posturing.
This girl is dead; and I confess I care
That she is dead.

James Branch Cabell

A MAN MUST LIVE

A man must live! We justify
Low shift and trick to treason high,
A little vote for a little gold,
To a whole senate bought and sold,
With this self-evident reply.

But is it so? Pray tell me why
Life at such cost you have to buy?
In what religion were you told
'A man must live?'

There are times when a man must die.
Imagine for a battle-cry
From soldier with a sword to hold—
From soldiers with the flag unrolled—
This coward's whine, this liar's lie,
'A man must live?'

Charlotte Perkins Stetson

ALL MEN ARE FREE!

'All men are free and equal born
Before the Law!' So runs the worn
And specious, lying, parrot-cry.
All men *are* free—to starve or sigh;
But few to feed on Egypt's corn.

There toils the sweated slave, forlorn;
There weeps the babe with hunger torn;
  Dear God! Forgive us for the lie—
    'All men are free!'

That man may laugh while this must mourn;
One's heir to honour, one to scorn—
  Were they born free? Were you? Was I?
  No! Not when born, but when they die
And of their robes—or rags—are shorn,
    All men are free!

Elliott Napier

IN FLANDERS FIELDS *

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
  That mark our place, and in the sky,
  The larks, still bravely singing, fly,
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead; short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
  Loved and were loved, and now we lie
    In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe!
To you from failing hands we throw
  The torch; be yours to hold it high!
  If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
  In Flanders fields.

John McCrae

* From *In Flanders Fields* by John McCrae. Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons, Publishers, New York and London.

ROUNDELS

THE ROUNDEL

A roundel is wrought as a ring or a star-bright sphere,
With craft of delight and with cunning of sound unsought,
That the heart of the hearer may smile if to pleasure his ear
A roundel is wrought.

Its jewel of music is carven of all or of aught—
Love, laughter or mourning—remembrance of rapture or fear—
That fancy may fashion to hang in the ear of thought.

As a bird's quick song runs round, and the hearts in us hear
Pause answer to pause, and again the same strain caught,
So moves the device whence, round as a pearl or tear,
A roundel is wrought.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

ÉTUDE RÉALISTE

I

A baby's feet, like sea-shells pink,
Might tempt, should heaven see meet,
An angel's lips to kiss, we think,
A baby's feet.

Like rose-hued sea-flowers toward the heat
They stretch and spread and wink
Their ten soft buds that part and meet.

No flower-bells that expand and shrink
Gleam half so heavenly sweet
As shine on life's untrodden brink
A baby's feet.

II

A baby's hands, like rosebuds furled,
  Whence yet no leaf expands,
Ope if you touch, though close upcurled,
    A baby's hands.

Then, even as warriors grip their brands
  When battle's bolt is hurled,
They close, clenched hard like tightening bands.

No rosebuds yet by dawn impearled
  Match, even in loveliest lands,
The sweetest flowers in all the world—
    A baby's hands.

III

A baby's eyes, ere speech begin
  Ere lips learn words or sighs,
Bless all things bright enough to win
    A baby's eyes.

Love, while the sweet thing laughs and lies,
  And sleep flows out and in,
Lies perfect in them Paradise.

Their glance might cast out pain and sin,
  Their speech make dumb the wise,
By mute glad godhead felt within
    A baby's eyes.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

BABYHOOD

I

A Baby shines as bright
If winter or if May be
On eyes that keep in sight
    A baby.

Though dark the skies or gray be,
It fills our eyes with light,
If midnight or midday be.

Love hails it, day and night,
The sweetest thing that may be,
Yet cannot praise aright
A baby.

II

All heaven, in every baby born,
All absolute of earthly leaven,
Reveals itself, tho' man may scorn
All heaven.

Yet man might feel all sin forgiven,
All grief appeased, all pain outworn,
By this one revelation given.

Soul, now forget thy burdens borne;
Heart, be thy joys now seven times seven:
Love shows in light more bright than morn
All heaven.

III

What likeness may define, and stray not
From truth's exactest way,
A baby's beauty? Love can say not
What likeness may.

The Mayflower loveliest held in May
Of all that shine and stay not
Laughs not in rosier disarray.

Sleek satin, swansdown, buds that play not
As yet with winds that play,
Would fain be matched with this, and may not:
What likeness may?

IV

Rose, round whose bed
Dawn's cloudlets close
Earth's brightest-bred
  Rose!

No song, love knows,
May praise the head
Your curtain shows.

Ere sleep has fled,
The whole child glows
One sweet live red
  Rose.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

FLOWER-PIECES

I

Love Lies Bleeding

Love lies bleeding in the bed whereover
Roses lean with smiling mouths or pleading:
Earth lies laughing where the sun's dart clove her:
  Love lies bleeding.

Stately shine his purple plumes, exceeding
Pride of princess; nor shall maid or lover
Find on earth a fairer sign worth heeding.

Yet may love, sore wounded, scarce recover
Strength and spirit again, with life receding:
Hope and joy, wind-winged, about him hover:
  Love lies bleeding.

II

Love in a Mist

Light love in a mist, by the midsummer moon misguided, a
Scarce seen in the twilight garden if gloom insist, b
Seems vainly to seek for a star whose gleam has derided a
Light love in a mist. R

All day in the sun, when the breezes do all they list, b
His soft blue raiment of cloudlike blossom abided a
Unrent and unwithered of winds and of rays that kissed. b

Blithe-hearted or sad, as the cloud or the sun subsided, a
Love smiled in the flower with a meaning whereof none wist b
Save two that beheld, as a gleam that before them glided, a
Light love in a mist. R

Algernon Charles Swinburne

AT SEA

'Farewell and adieu' was the burden prevailing
Long since in the chant of a home-faring crew;
And the heart in us echoes, with laughing or wailing,
Farewell and adieu.

Each year that we live shall we sing it anew,
With a water untravelled before us for sailing
And a water behind us that wrecks may bestrew.

The stars of the past and the beacons are paling,
The heavens and the waters are hoarier of hue;
But the heart in us chants not an all unavailing
Farewell and adieu.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

THREE FACES

I

Ventimiglia

The sky and sea glared hard and bright and blank:
Down the one steep street, with slow steps firm and free
A tall girl paced, with eyes too proud to thank
The sky and sea.

One dead flat sapphire, void of wrath or glee,
Through bay on bay shone blind from blank to blank
The weary Mediterranean, drear to see.

More deep, more living, shone her eyes that drank
The breathless light and shed again on me,
Till pale before their splendor waned and shrank
The sky and sea.

II

Genoa

Again the same strange might of eyes, that saw
In heaven and earth nought fairer, overcame
My sight with rapture of reiterate awe,
Again the same.

The self-same pulse of wonder shook like flame
The spirit of sense within me: what strange law
Had bid this be, for blessing or for blame?

To what veiled end that fate or chance foresaw
Came forth this second sister face, that came
Absolute, perfect, fair, without a flaw,
Again the same?

III

Venice

Out of the dark pure twilight, where the stream
Flows glimmering, streaked by many a birdlike bark
That skims the gloom whence towers and bridges gleam
Out of the dark,

Once more a face no glance might choose but mark
Shone pale and bright, with eyes whose deep slow beam
Made quick the twilight, lifeless else and stark.

The same it seemed, or mystery made it seem,
As those before beholden; but St. Mark
Ruled here the ways that showed it like a dream
Out of the dark.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

TO CATULLUS

My brother, my Valerius, dearest head
Of all whose crowning bay-leaves crown their mother,
Rome, in the notes first heard of thine I read
My brother.

No dust that death or time can strew may smother
Love and the sense of kinship inly bred
From loves and hates at one with one another.

To thee was Cæsar's self nor dear nor dread,
Song and the sea were sweeter each than other:
How should I living fear to call thee dead
My brother?

Algernon Charles Swinburne

PAST DAYS

I

Dead and gone, the days we had together,
Shadow-stricken all the lights that shone
Round them, flown as flies the blown-foam's feather,
Dead and gone.

Where we went, we twain, in time foregone,
Forth by land and sea, and cared not whether,
If I go again, I go alone.

Bound am I with time as with a tether;
Thee perchance death leads enfranchised on,
Far from deathlike life and changeful weather,
Dead and gone.

II

Above the sea and sea-washed town we dwelt,
We twain together, two brief summers, free
From heed of hours as light as clouds that melt
Above the sea.

Free from all heed of aught at all were we,
Save chance of change that clouds or sunbeams dealt
And gleam of heaven to windward or to lee.

The Norman downs with bright gray waves for belt
Were more for us than inland ways might be;
A clearer sense of nearer heaven was felt
Above the sea.

III

Cliffs and downs and headlands which the forward-hasting
Flight of dawn and eve empurples and embrowns,
Wings of wild sea-winds and stormy seasons wasting
Cliffs and downs,

These, or ever man was, were: the same sky frowns,
Laughs, and lightens, as before his soul, forecasting
Times to be, conceived such hopes as time discrowns.

These we loved of old: but now for me the blasting
Breath of death makes dull the bright small seaward towns,
Clothes with human change these all but everlasting
Cliffs and downs.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

TWO PRELUDES

I

Lohengrin

Love, out of the depth of things,
As a dewfall felt from above,
From the heaven whence only springs
Love—

Love, heard from the heights thereof,
The clouds and the watersprings,
Draws close as the clouds remove.

And the soul in it speaks and sings,
A swan sweet-souled as a dove,
An echo that only rings
Love.

II

Tristan und Isolde

Fate out of the deep sea's gloom,
When a man's heart's pride grows great,
And nought seems now to foredoom
Fate,

Fate, laden with fears in wait,
Draws close through the clouds that loom,
Till the soul see, all too late,

More dark than a dead world's tomb,
More high than the sheer dawn's gate,
More deep than the wide sea's womb,
Fate.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

A ROUNDEL

(1915)

A year ago were love and mirth
And Youth's gay, careless flow;
For him flamed Life in all its ardent worth,
A year ago.

Love came with her enchanting glow,
And doubly blessed his happy birth;
Yet those the gods love—Well, we know!

Beneath a nameless mound of earth
He lies, where daisies grow,
Leaving a void in hearts that knew no dearth
A year ago.

Arthur Compton-Rickett

BETWEEN THE SHOWERS

Between the showers I went my way,
The glistening street was bright with flowers;
It seemed that March had turned to May.
Between the showers.

Above the shining roofs and towers
The blue broke forth athwart the grey;
Birds carolled in their leafless bowers,

Hither and thither, swift and gay,
  The people chased the changeful hours;
And you, you passed and smiled that day,
  Between the showers.

Amy Levy

STRAW IN THE STREET

Straw in the street where I pass to-day
Dulls the sound of the wheels and feet.
'Tis for a failing life they lay
  Straw in the street.

Here, where the pulses of London beat,
Someone strives with the Presence grey,
Ah, is it victory or defeat?

The hurrying people go their way,
Pause and jostle and pass and greet;
For life, for death, are they treading, say,
  Straw in the street?

Amy Levy

A ROUNDEL OF REST

If rest is sweet at shut of day
  For tired hands and tired feet,
How sweet at last to rest for aye,
  If rest is sweet!

We work or work not through the heat:
  Death bids us soon our labours lay
In lands where night and twilight meet.

When the last dawns are fallen on grey
  And all life's toils and ease complete,
They know who work, not they who play,
  If rest is sweet.

Arthur Symons

MORS ET VITA

We know not yet what life shall be,
  What shore beyond earth's shore be set;
What grief awaits us, or what glee,
                We know not yet.

Still, somewhere in sweet converse met,
  Old friends, we say, beyond death's sea
Shall meet and greet us, nor forget

Those days of yore, those years when we
  Were loved and true,—but will death let
Our eyes the longed-for vision see?
                We know not yet.

Samuel Waddington

THE POET'S PRAYER

To buy my book—if you will be so kind—
  Is all I ask of you; and not to look
What fruit lies hid beneath the azure rind:
        To *buy* my book.

This for her hymn-book *Rosalind* mistook,
  When worshipping with yokel, maid, and hind;
Neæra read it in a flowery nook.
  And gave her loose curls to the wanton wind.
For this her grammar *Sylvia* once forsook,
  Of you I only ask—you will not mind?—
        To *buy* my book.

J. K. Stephen

RONDEAUX REDOUBLÉS

THE PRAYER OF DRYOPE

(Rondeau Redoublé)

O goddess sweet, give ear unto my prayer.
  Come with thy doves across the briny sea,
Leave thy tall fanes and thy rose gardens rare,
  From cruel bondage set thy vot'ress free!

Ah, how my heart would joy again to be
  Like chirming bird that cleaves the sunny air,
Like wildwood roe that bounds in ecstasy;
  O goddess sweet, give ear unto my prayer!

That I am innocent hast thou no care
  Of crime against celestial deity?
Must I the fate of lovely Lotis share?—
  Come with thy doves across the briny sea!

I hear no waters' silvern melody,
  And yet the rippling water once was there,
And on its bloomy banks I worshipped thee;—
  Leave thy tall fanes and thy rose gardens rare!

Could I but feel my boy's hands on my hair,
  Could I but kiss my sister Iole,
Then bravely would I cast forth chill despair,
  From cruel bondage set thy vot'ress free!

I, who was once the blithesome Dryope,
Am now a tree bole, cold and brown and bare;
Pity, I pray, my ceaseless agony,
Or grant forgetfulness of all things fair,
O goddess sweet.

Clinton Scollard

RONDEAU REDOUBLÉ

I will go hence, and seek her, my old Love;
All bramble-laced, and moss-grown is the way,
There is no sun, nor broad, red moon above,
The year is old, he said, and skies are grey.

The rose-wreaths fade, the viols are not gay,
That which seemed sweet doth passing bitter prove;
So sweet *she* was, she will not say me nay—
I will go hence and seek her, my old Love.

Low, labouring sighs stirred coldly through the grove,
Where buds unblossomed on the mosses lay;
His upraised hands the dusky tangle clove,
"All bramble-laced and moss-grown is the way!"

With grievous eyes, and lips that smiled alway,
Strange, flitting shapes, wreathed round him as he strove
Their spectral arms, and filmy green array;
There was no sun, no broad red moon above.

Here lies her lute—and here her slender glove;
(Her bower well won, sweet joy shall crown the day);
But her he saw not, vanished was his Love.
The year is old, he said, and skies are grey.

The wrong was mine! he cried. I left my dove
(He flung him down upon the weeping clay),
And now I find her flown—ah, wellaway!
The house is desolate that held my Love,
I will go hence.

Graham R. Tomson

A DAUGHTER OF THE NORTH

Who wins my hand must do these three things well:
Skate fast as winter wind across the glare;
Swim through the fiord, past breaker, rip and swell;
Ride like the Storm Fiend on my snow-white mare!

Shall a maid do what Viking may not dare?
I wed no lover I can aught excel—
Skate, swim and ride with me, and I declare,
Who wins my hand must do these three things well!

Bind on your skates, and after me pell-mell;
Follow me, Carles, and catch my streaming hair!
(Keep the black ice—O Bolstrom, if you fell!)
Skate fast as winter wind across the glare!

Thrice have I swum from this grey cliff to where
On the far side, the angry surges yell;
(Into the surf! O Bolstrom, have a care!)
Swim through the fiord, past breaker, rip and swell!

Bring out my Frieda, none but I can quell;
(Watch her eye, Bolstrom, when you mount—beware!)
Ride bareback now and find the master-spell;
Ride like the Storm Fiend on my snow-white mare!

Skohl! Vikings, Skohl! Am I not bold and fair?
Who would not barter Heaven, and venture Hell,
Striving the flower of my love to wear?
(Mind my words, Bolstrom, hark to what I tell!)
Who wins my hand?

Gelett Burgess

RONDEAU REDOUBLÉ

My day and night are in my lady's hand;
I have no other sunrise than her sight;
For me her favour glorifies the land;
Her anger darkens all the cheerful light.

Her face is fairer than the hawthorn white,
When all a-flower in May the hedgerows stand;
While she is kind, I know of no affright;
My day and night are in my lady's hand.

All heaven in her glorious eyes is spanned;
Her smile is softer than the summer's night,
Gladder than daybreak on the Faery strand;
I have no other sunrise than her sight.

Her silver speech is like the singing flight
Of runnels rippling o'er the jewelled sand;
Her kiss a dream of delicate delight;
For me her favour glorifies the land.

What if the Winter chase the Summer bland!
The gold sun in her hair burns ever bright.
If she be sad, straightway all joy is banned;
Her anger darkens all the cheerful light.

Come weal or woe, I am my lady's knight
And in her service every ill withstand;
Love is my Lord in all the world's despite
And holdeth in the hollow of his hand
My day and night.

John Payne

RONDEAU REDOUBLE

My soul is sick of nightingale and rose,
The perfume and the darkness of the grove;
I weary of the fevers and the throes,
And all the enervating dreams of love.

At morn I love to hear the lark, and rove
The meadows, where the simple daisy shows
Her guiltless bosom to the skies above—
My soul is sick of nightingale and rose.

The afternoon is sweet, and sweet repose,
But let me lie where breeze-blown branches move.
I hate the stillness where the sunbeams doze,
The perfume and the darkness of the grove.

I love to hear at eve the gentle dove
Contented coo the day's delightful close.
She sings of love and all the calm thereof,—
I weary of the fevers and the throes.

I love the night, who like a mother throws
Her arms round hearts that throbbed and limbs
that strove,
As kind as Death, that puts an end to woes
And all the enervating dreams of love.

Because my soul is sick of fancies wove
Of fervid ecstasies and crimson glows;
Because the taste of cinnamon and clove
Palls on my palate—let no man suppose
My soul is sick.

Cosmo Monkhouse

A COMPLACENT RONDEAU REDOUBLÉ

Musis amicus tristitiam et metus
tradam protervis in mare.—Horace. Book I: Ode 26

The Muses love me, and I am content,
For naught to me is either grief or fear;
The winds will sweep them into banishmen ,
The sea will drag them to a briny bier.

Let others quail and, trembling, force the tear,
And cringe, with looks that on the ground are bent;
Let all the angry powers of earth appear,
The Muses love me—and I am content.

What though the days of joy are only lent,
  What though the skies are overcast and drear;
I care not if the thundering heavens be rent,
  For naught to me is either grief or fear.

Come, then, bright-hearted nymph from brooklets clear,
  A garland for my Lamia weave; nor vent
Thy proud disdain upon my verses here—
  The winds will sweep them into banishment.

O, come, with perfumed words from Venus sent
  And twine a golden couplet for our cheer.
(Mind not the cares that mar our merriment;
  The sea will drag them to a briny bier).

Attune my strings and so, for many a year,
  Singing of thee I will be diligent;
And even when the leaves of life are sere,
  One thought will cheer me when all else is spent:
The Muses love me.

Louis Untermeyer

TRIOLETS

TRIOLET

Easy is the Triolet,
  If you really learn to make it!
Once a neat refrain you get,
Easy is the Triolet.
As you see!—I pay my debt
  With another rhyme. Deuce take it,
Easy is the Triolet,
  If you really learn to make it!

W. E. Henley

THE TRIOLET

Your triolet should glimmer
  Like a butterfly;
In golden light, or dimmer,
Your triolet should glimmer,
Tremble, turn, and shimmer,
  Flash, and flutter by;
Your triolet should glimmer
  Like a butterfly.

Don Marquis

A PITCHER OF MIGNONETTE *

A pitcher of mignonette
  In a tenement's highest casement,—
Queer sort of flower-pot—yet
That pitcher of mignonette
Is a garden in heaven set,
  To the little sick child in the basement—
The pitcher of mignonette,
  In a tenement's highest casement.

Henry Cuyler Bunner

A SNOWFLAKE IN MAY

(Triolet)

I saw a snowflake in the air
  When smiling May had decked the year,
And then 'twas gone, I knew not where,—
I saw a snowflake in the air,
And thought perchance an angel's prayer
  Had fallen from some starry sphere;
I saw a snowflake in the air
  When smiling May had decked the year.

Clinton Scollard

AUGUST? :

Hottest day of the year

Now, isn't it hot?
  There is really no breathing
In the devil's own pot.
Now, isn't it hot?
A true Hottentot
  Would confess he was seething
In a city so hot.
  There is really no breathing!

Brander Matthews

LES ROSES MORTES

The roses are dead,
  And swallows are flying:
White, golden, and red,
The roses are dead;
Yet tenderly tread
  Where their petals are lying:
The roses are dead,
  And swallows are flying.

Graham R. Tomson

MISTLETOE AND HOLLY

The mistletoe is gemmed with pearls,
  Red berries hath the holly.
Remember, all ye modest girls,
The mistletoe is gemmed with pearls,
And when it hangs above your curls,
  Away with melancholy!
The mistletoe is gemmed with pearls,
  Red berries hath the holly.

Since mistletoe is hard to find,
  We do not need it, Mollie.
Oh! do, I beg of you, be kind;
Since mistletoe is hard to find,
Pretend that you are color-blind
  And kiss beneath the holly.
Since mistletoe is hard to find,
  We do not need it, Mollie.

T. A. Daly

ROSE-LEAVES

"Sans peser.—Sans rester."

A KISS

Rose kissed me to-day.
  Will she kiss me to-morrow?
Let it be as it may,
Rose kissed me to-day.
But the pleasure gives way
  To a savour of sorrow;—
Rose kissed me to-day,—
  Will she kiss me to-morrow?

CIRCE

In the School of Coquettes
  Madam Rose is a scholar:—
O, they fish with all nets
In the School of Coquettes!
When her brooch she forgets
  'Tis to show her new collar;
In the School of Coquettes
  Madam Rose is a scholar!

A TEAR

There's a tear in her eye,—
  Such a clear little jewel!
What *can* make her cry?
There's a tear in her eye.
"Puck has killed a big fly,—
  And it's *horribly* cruel;"
There's a tear in her eye,—
  Such a clear little jewel!

A GREEK GIFT

Here's a present for Rose,
  How pleased she is looking!
Is it verse?—is it prose?
Here's a present for Rose!
"*Plats*," "*Entrées*," and "*Rôts*,"—
  Why, it's "Gouffé on Cooking"!
Here's a present for Rose,
  How pleased she is looking!

"URCEUS EXIT"

I intended an Ode,
  And it turned to a Sonnet.
It began *à la mode*,
I intended an Ode;

But Rose crossed the road
  In her latest new bonnet;
I intended an Ode;
  And it turned to a Sonnet.

Austin Dobson

UNDER THE ROSE

HE (*aside*)

If I should steal a little kiss,
  Oh, would she weep, I wonder?
I tremble at the thought of bliss,—
If I should steal a little kiss!
Such pouting lips would never miss
  The dainty bit of plunder;
If I should steal a little kiss,
  Oh, would she weep, I wonder?

SHE (*aside*)

He longs to steal a kiss of mine—
  He may, if he'll return it:
If I can read the tender sign,
He longs to steal a kiss of mine;
"In love and war"—you know the line
  Why cannot he discern it?
He longs to steal a kiss of mine—
  He may if he'll return it.

BOTH (*five minutes later*)

A little kiss when no one sees,
  Where is the impropriety?
How sweet amid the birds and bees
A little kiss when no one sees!
Nor is it wrong, the world agrees,
  If taken with sobriety.
A little kiss when no one sees,
  Where is the impropriety?

Samuel Minturn Peck

A ROSE

'Twas a Jacqueminot rose
  That she gave me at parting;
Sweetest flower that blows,
'Twas a Jacqueminot rose.
In the love garden close,
  With the swift blushes starting,
'Twas a Jacqueminot rose
  That she gave me at parting.

If she kissed it, who knows—
  Since I will not discover,
And love is that close,
If she kissed it, who knows?
Or if not the red rose
  Perhaps then the lover!
If she kissed it, who knows,
  Since I will not discover.

Yet at least with the rose
  Went a kiss that I'm wearing!
More I will not disclose,
Yet at least with the rose
Went *whose* kiss no one knows,—
  Since I'm only declaring,
"Yet at least with the rose
  Went a kiss that I'm wearing."

Arlo Bates

IN EXPLANATION

Her lips were so near
  That—what else could I do?
You'll be angry, I fear.
But her lips were so near—

Well, I can't make it clear,
  Or explain it to you.
But—her lips were so near
  That—what else could I do?

Walter Learned

TWO TRIOLETS

I

(What He Said)

This kiss upon your fan I press,
  Ah! Saint Nitouche, you don't refuse it,
And may it from its soft recess,
This kiss upon your fan I press,
Be blown to you a shy caress
  By this white down whene'er you use it;
This kiss upon your fan I press,
  Ah! Saint Nitouche, you don't refuse it.

II

(What She Thought)

To kiss a fan!
  What a poky poet!
The stupid man
To kiss a fan,
When he knows that—he—can,
  Or ought to know it.
To kiss a fan!
  What a poky poet!

Harrison Robertson

APOLOGY

Perhaps I made a slight mistake;
  At least I *meant* to kiss the rose.
But as we skimmed the frozen lake
I *may* have made a slight mistake.

She wore the rose, and—goodness' sake!
  How like they were! So I suppose
I *may* have made a slight mistake;
  At least I *meant* to kiss the rose.

Arthur Guiterman

PARABLE

What is it makes it a Hat?
  Many things added together.
(Women are also like that.)
What is it makes it a Hat?
Neither the felt nor the plat,
  Neither the form nor the feather.
What is it makes it a Hat?
  Many things added together.

Arthur Guiterman

TRIOLET

All women born are so perverse
No man need boast their love possessing.
If nought seem better, nothing's worse:
All women born are so perverse.
From Adam's wife, that proved a curse
Though God had made her for a blessing,
All women born are so perverse
No man need boast their love possessing.

Robert Bridges

TRIOLET

When first we met we did not guess
That Love would prove so hard a master;
Of more than common friendliness
When first we met we did not guess.
Who could foretell this sore distress,
This irretrievable disaster
When first we met?—We did not guess
That Love would prove so hard a master.

Robert Bridges

THISTLE-DOWN *

Thistle-down is a woman's love,—
  Thistle-down with the wind at play.
Let him who wills this truth to prove,
  'Thistle-down is a woman's love,'
Seek her innermost heart to move.
  Though the wind should blow her vows this way,
Thistle-down is a woman's love,—
  Thistle-down with the wind at play.

Louise Chandler Moulton

BLIND LOVE

Love hath wept till he is blind,
  Lovers, guide him on his way;
Though he be of fickle mind,
Love hath wept till he is blind.
Once ye knew him fair and kind;
  Now, alas and well-a-day!
Love hath wept till he is blind—
  Lovers, guide him on his way!

Graham R. Tomson

OF HIMSELF

A poor cicala, piping shrill,
  I may not ape the Nightingale;
I sit upon the sun-browned hill,
A poor cicala, piping shrill,
When summer noon is warm and still,
  Content to chirp my homely tale;
A poor cicala, piping shrill,
  I may not ape the Nightingale.

Graham R. Tomson

* From *Poems and Sonnets* by Louise Chandler Moulton. Copyright 1909, Little, Brown & Company, Publishers.

TRIOLET, AFTER CATULLUS

"Jucundum, mea vita."

Happy, my Life, the love you proffer,
  Eternal as the gods above;
With such a wealth within my coffer,
Happy my life. The love you proffer,—
If your true heart sustains the offer,—
  Will prove the Koh-i-noor of love;
Happy my life! The love you proffer,
  Eternal as the gods above!

Edmund Gosse

"PERSICOS ODI"

Davus, I detest
  Orient display;
Wreaths on linden drest,
Davus, I detest.
Let the late rose rest
  Where it fades away:—
Davus, I detest
  Orient display.

Naught but myrtle twine
  Therefore, Boy, for me
Sitting 'neath the vine,—
Naught but myrtle twine;
Fitting to the wine,
  Not unfitting thee;
Naught but myrtle twine
  Therefore, Boy, for me.

Austin Dobson

TRIOLETS AFTER MOSCHUS

Αἰαῖ ταὶ μαλάχαι μὲν ἐπὰν κατὰ κᾶπον ὄλωντα·
ὕστερον αὖ ζώοντι καὶ εἰς ἔτος ἄλλο φύοντι
ἄμμες δ' οἱ μεγάλοι καὶ καρτεροί, οἱ σοφοὶ ἄνδρες
ὁππότε πρᾶτα θάνωμες, ἀνάκοοι ἐν χθονὶ κοίλᾳ
εὕδομες εὖ μάλα μακρὸν ἀτέρμονα νήγρετον ὕπνον.

Alas, for us no second spring,
  Like mallows in the garden-bed,
For these the grave has lost his sting,
Alas, for *us* no second spring,
Who sleep without awakening,
  And, dead, for ever more are dead,
Alas, for us no second spring,
  Like mallows in the garden-bed!

Alas, the strong, the wise, the brave,
  That boast themselves the sons of men!
Once they go down into the grave—
Alas, the strong, the wise, the brave,—
They perish and have none to save,
  They are sown, and are not raised again;
Alas, the strong, the wise, the brave,
  That boast themselves the sons of men!

Andrew Lang

THE SHELLEY MEMORIAL

(The Master's Speech)

The Rebel of eighty years ago
  Is the Hero of to-day.
In this memorial none will know
The Rebel of eighty years ago.
We Oxford Dons, however slow,
  Are now at last compelled to say
"The Rebel of eighty years ago
  Is the Hero of to-day."

Ernest Radford

TRIOLET OF THE BIBLIOPHILE

Be it mine to peruse
  Old prints and editions;
Books our fathers might use
Be it mine to peruse.

Let others hunt news
  And go mad about missions:—
Be it mine to peruse
  Old prints and editions.

Charles Sayle

TRIOLET TO HER HUSBAND

(F. Fertiault)

Books rule thy mind, so let it be!
Thy heart is mine, and mine alone.
What more can I require of thee?
Books rule thy mind, so let it be!
Contented when thy bliss I see,
I wish a world of books thine own.
Books rule thy mind, so let it be!
Thy heart is mine, and mine alone.

Andrew Lang

SIX TRIOLETS

DEAR READER

If you never write verses yourself,
  Dear reader, I leave it with you,
You will grant a half-inch of your shelf,
If you never write verses yourself.
It was praised by some lenient elf,
  It was damned by a heavy review;
If you never write verses yourself,
  Dear reader, I leave it with you.

TRANSPONTINE

Ices—Programmes—Lemonade!
  'E thinks 'e's a Hirving, my eye!
Why, Pussy, you're crying: afraid?
Ices—Programmes—Lemonade!
It's the first time you've seen a piece played?
  It's pretty, but, Pussy, don't cry.

Ices—Programmes—Lemonade!
  'E thinks 'e's a Hirving, my eye!

OUT *

I killed her? Ah, why do they cheer?
  Are those twenty years gone to-day?
Why, she was my wife, sir, dear—so dear.
I killed her? Ah, why do they cheer?
  . . . Ah, hound! He was shaking with fear,
And I rushed—with a knife, they say. . . .
I killed her? Ah, why do they cheer?
  Are those twenty years gone to-day?

A HUPROAR

Down 'Ob'n, sir? Circus, Bank, Bank!
  'Ere's a huproar, my bloomin', hoff side!
A flower, miss? Ah, thankee, miss, thank—
Down 'Ob'n, sir? Circus, Bank, Bank!
'Igher up! 'Ullo, Bill, wot a prank!
  If that 'ere old carcase ain't shied!
Down 'Ob'n, sir? Circus, Bank, Bank!
  'Ere's a huproar, my bloomin', hoff side!

SPRING VOICES

Fine Violets! fresh Violets! come buy!
  Ah, rich man! I would not be you.
All spring-time it haunts me, that cry:—
Fine Violets! fresh Violets! come buy!
Whose loss if she tell me a lie?
  "They're starving; my God, sir, it's true."
Fine Violets! fresh Violets! come buy!
  Ah, rich man! I would not be you!

* *v.* Police Reports of the release of George Hall from Birmingham prison.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Cigar lights! yer honour? Cigar lights?
  May God forget you in your need.
Ay, damn you! if folks get their rights
(Cigar lights! yer honour?—cigar lights)
Their babies shan't starve in the nights
  For wanting the price of your weed—
Cigar lights! yer honour? Cigar lights!
  May God forget you in your need!

Ernest Radford

SERENADE TRIOLET

Why is the moon
  Awake when thou sleepest?
To the nightingale's tune
Why is the moon
Making a noon
  When night is the deepest?
Why is the moon
  Awake when thou sleepest?

George Macdonald

SONG

I

I was very cold
  In the summer weather;
The sun shone all his gold,
But I was very cold—
Alone, we were grown old,
  Love and I together!—
Oh, but I was cold
  In the summer weather!

II

Sudden I grew warmer,
  When the brooks were frozen:—
"To be angry is to harm her,"
I said, and straight grew warmer.
"Better men, the charmer
  Knows at least a dozen!"—
I said, and straight grew warmer,
  Though the brooks were frozen.

III

Spring sits on her nest—
  Daisies and white clover;
And my heart at rest
Lies in the spring's young nest:
My love she loves me best,
  And the frost is over!
Spring sits on her nest—
  Daisies and white clover!

George Macdonald

TRIOLET

In the light, in the shade,
  This is time and life's measure:
With a heart unafraid,
In the light, in the shade,
Hope is born and not made,
  And the heart finds its treasure
In the light, in the shade;
  This is time and life's measure.

Walter Crane

VESTIGIA

I

I saw her shadow on the grass
  That day we walked together.
Across the field where the pond was
I saw her shadow on the grass.
And now I sigh and say, Alas!
  That e'er in summer weather
I saw her shadow on the grass
  That day we walked together!

II

Hope bowed his head in sleep:
  Ah me and wellaway!
Although I cannot weep,
Hope bowed his head in sleep.
The heavy hours creep:
  When is the break of day?
Hope bowed his head in sleep,
  Ah me and wellaway!

III

The sea on the beach
  Flung the foam of its ire.
We watched without speech
The sea on the beach,
And we clung each to each
  As the tempest shrilled higher
And the sea on the beach
  Flung the foam of its ire.

IV

When Love is once dead
  Who shall awake him?

Bitter our bread
When Love is once dead
His comforts are fled,
  His favours forsake him.
When Love is once dead
  Who shall awake him?

V

Love is a swallow
  Flitting with spring:
Though we would follow,
Love is a swallow,
All his vows hollow:
  Then let us sing,
Love is a swallow
  Flitting with spring.

Arthur Symons

TRIOLET

Oh, that men would praise the Lord
  For his goodness unto men!
Forth he sends his saving word,
  —Oh, that men would praise the Lord!—
And from shades of death abhorred
  Lift them up to light again:
Oh, that men would praise the Lord
  For his goodness unto men.

George Macdonald

SONG

I make my shroud, but no one knows—
So shimmering fine it is and fair,
With stitches set in even rows,
I make my shroud, but no one knows.

In door-way where the lilac blows,
Humming a little wandering air,
I make my shroud and no one knows,
So shimmering fine it is and fair.

Adelaide Crapsey

VILLANELLES

VILLANELLE

I

Wouldst thou not be content to die
  When low-hung fruit is hardly clinging,
And golden Autumn passes by?

Beneath this delicate rose-gray sky,
  While sunset bells are faintly ringing,
Wouldst thou not be content to die?

For wintry webs of mist on high
  Out of the muffled earth are springing,
And golden Autumn passes by.

O now when pleasures fade and fly,
  And Hope her southward flight is winging,
Wouldst thou not be content to die?

Lest Winter come, with wailing cry
  His cruel icy bondage bringing,
When golden Autumn hath passed by.

And thou, with many a tear and sigh,
  While life her wasted hands is wringing,
Shalt pray in vain for leave to die
When golden Autumn hath passed by.

Edmund Gosse

VILLANELLE

Little mistress mine, good-bye!
  I have been your sparrow true;
Dig my grave, for I must die.

Waste no tear and heave no sigh;
  Life should still be blithe for you,
Little mistress mine, good-bye!

In your garden let me lie,
  Underneath the pointed yew
Dig my grave, for I must die.

We have loved the quiet sky
  With its tender arch of blue;
Little mistress mine, good-bye!

That I still may feel you nigh,
  In your virgin bosom, too,
Dig my grave, for I must die.

Let our garden friends that fly
  Be the mourners, fit and few.
Little mistress mine, good-bye!
Dig my grave, for I must die.

Edmund Gosse

"A VOICE IN THE SCENTED NIGHT"

(Villanelle at Verona)

A voice in the scented night,—
  A step where the rose-trees blow,—
O Love, and O Love's delight!

Cold star at the blue vault's height,
  What is it that shakes you so?
A voice in the scented night!

She comes in her beauty bright,—
  She comes in her young love's glow,—
O Love, and O Love's delight!

She bends from her casement white,
  And she hears it, hushed and low,
A voice in the scented night.

And he climbs by that stairway slight,—
  Her passionate ROMEO:—
O Love, and O Love's delight!

For it stirs us still in spite
  Of its "ever so long ago,"
That voice in the scented night,—
O Love, and O Love's delight!

Austin Dobson

FOR A COPY OF THEOCRITUS

O singer of the field and fold,
Theocritus! Pan's pipe was thine,—
Thine was the happier Age of Gold.

For thee the scent of new-turned mould,
The bee-hives, and the murmuring pine,
O Singer of the field and fold!

Thou sang'st the simple feasts of old,—
The beechen bowl made glad with wine. . . .
Thine was the happier Age of Gold.

Thou bad'st the rustic loves be told,—
Thou bad'st the tuneful reeds combine,
O Singer of the field and fold!

And round thee, ever-laughing, rolled
The blithe and blue Sicilian brine. . . .
Thine was the happier Age of Gold.

Alas for us! Our songs are cold;
Our Northern suns too sadly shine:—
O Singer of the field and fold,
Thine was the happier Age of Gold!

Austin Dobson

"WHEN I SAW YOU LAST, ROSE"

When I saw you last, Rose,
You were only so high;—
How fast the time goes!

Like a bud ere it blows,
You just peeped at the sky,
When I saw you last, Rose!

Now your petals unclose,
Now your May-time is nigh;—
How fast the time goes!

And a life,—how it grows!
You were scarcely so shy,
When I saw you last, Rose!

In your bosom it shows
There's a guest on the sly;
(How fast the time goes!)

Is it Cupid? Who knows!
Yet you used not to sigh,
When I saw you last, Rose;—
How fast the time goes!

Austin Dobson

ON A NANKIN PLATE

"Ah me, but it might have been!
Was there ever so dismal a fate?"—
Quoth the little blue mandarin

"Such a maid as was never seen!
She passed, tho' I cried to her, 'Wait,'—
Ah me, but it might have been!

"I cried, 'O my Flower, my Queen,
Be mine!' 'Twas precipitate,"—
Quoth the little blue mandarin,—

"But then . . . she was just sixteen,—
Long-eyed,—as a lily straight,—
Ah me, but it might have been!

"As it was, from her palankeen,
She laughed—'You're a week too late!' "
(Quoth the little blue mandarin.)

"That is why, in a mist of spleen,
I mourn on this Nankin Plate.
Ah me, but it might have been!"—
Quoth the little blue mandarin.

Austin Dobson

VILLANELLE

(To Lucia)

Apollo left the golden Muse
And shepherded a mortal's sheep,
Theocritus of Syracuse!

To mock the giant swain that woos
The sea-nymph in the sunny deep,
Apollo left the golden Muse.

Afield he drove his lambs and ewes,
Where Milon and where Battus reap,
Theocritus of Syracuse!

To watch thy tunny-fishers cruise
Below the dim Sicilian steep
Apollo left the Golden Muse!

Ye twain did loiter in the dews,
Ye slept the swain's unfever'd sleep,
Theocritus of Syracuse!

That Time might half with *his* confuse
Thy songs,—like his, that laugh and leap,—
Theocritus of Syracuse,
Apollo left the Golden Muse!

Andrew Lang

VILLANELLE

(To M. Joseph Boulmier, Author of "Les Villanelles.")

Villanelle, why art thou mute?
  Hath the singer ceased to sing?
Hath the Master lost his lute?

Many a pipe and scrannel flute
  On the breeze their discords fling;
Villanelle, why art *thou* mute?

Sound of tumult and dispute,
  Noise of war the echoes bring;
Hath the Master lost his lute?

Once he sang of bud and shoot
  In the season of the Spring;
Villanelle, why art thou mute?

Fading leaf and falling fruit
  Say, "The year is on the wing,
Hath the Master lost his lute?"

Ere the axe lie at the root,
  Ere the winter come as king,
Villanelle, why art thou mute?
Hath the Master lost his lute?

Andrew Lang

VILLANELLE

A dainty thing's the Villanelle.
  Sly, musical, a jewel in rhyme,
It serves its purpose passing well.

A double-clappered silver bell
  That must be made to clink in chime,
A dainty thing's the Villanelle;

And if you wish to flute a spell,
  Or ask a meeting 'neath the lime,
It serves its purpose passing well.

You must not ask of it the swell
  Of organs grandiose and sublime—
A dainty thing's the Villanelle;

And, filled with sweetness, as a shell
  Is filled with sound, and launched in time,
It serves its purpose passing well.

Still fair to see and good to smell
  As in the quaintness of its prime,
A dainty thing's the Villanelle,
It serves its purpose passing well.

W. E. Henley.

VILLANELLE

In the clatter of the train
  Is a promise brisk and bright.
I shall see my love again!

I am tired and fagged and fain;
  But I feel a still delight
In the clatter of the train,

Hurry-hurrying on amain
  Through the moonshine thin and white—
I shall see my love again!

Many noisy miles remain;
  But a sympathetic sprite
In the clatter of the train

Hammers cheerful:—that the strain
  Once concluded and the fight,
I shall see my love again.

Yes, the overword is plain,—
  If it's trivial, if it's trite—
In the clatter of the train:
"I shall see my love again."

W. E. Henley

VILLANELLE OF MARGUERITES

"*A little, passionately, not at all?*"
  She casts the snowy petals on the air;
And what care we how many petals fall?

  Nay, wherefore seek the seasons to forestall?
  It is but playing, and she will not care,
A little, passionately, not at all!

  She would not answer us if we should call
  Across the years; her visions are too fair;
And what care we how many petals fall!

  She knows us not, nor recks if she enthrall
  With voice and eyes and fashion of her hair,
A little, passionately, not at all!

  Knee-deep she goes in meadow-grasses tall,
  Kissed by the daisies that her fingers tear;
And what care we how many petals fall!

  We pass and go; but she shall not recall
  What men we were, nor all she made us bear;
  "*A little, passionately, not at all!*"
And what care we how many petals fall!

Ernest Dowson

VILLANELLE OF ACHERON

By the pale marge of Acheron
  Methinks we shall pass restfully,
Beyond the scope of any sun.

There all men hie them one by one,
  Far from the stress of earth and sea,
By the pale marge of Acheron.

'Tis well when life and love is done,
  'Tis very well at last to be,
Beyond the scope of any sun.

No busy voices there shall stun
  Our ears: the stream flows silently
By the pale marge of Acheron.

There is the crown of labour won,
  The sleep of immortality,
Beyond the scope of any sun.

Life, of thy gifts I will have none,
  My Queen is that Persephone,
By the pale marge of Acheron,
Beyond the scope of any sun.

Ernest Dowson

VILLANELLE OF SUNSET

Come hither, child! and rest:
  This is the end of day,
Behold the weary West!
Sleep rounds with equal zest
  Man's toil and children's play:
Come hither, child! and rest.
My white bird, seek thy nest,
  Thy drooping head down lay:
Behold the weary West!
Now are the flowers confest
  Of slumber: sleep, as they!
Come hither, child! and rest.
Now eve is manifest,
  And homeward lies our way:
Behold the weary West!

Tired flower! upon my breast,
  I would wear thee, alway:
Come hither, child! and rest;
Behold, the weary West!

Ernest Dowson

VILLANELLE OF THE POET'S ROAD

Wine and woman and song,
  Three things garnish our way:
Yet is day over long.

Lest we do our youth wrong,
  Gather them while we may:
Wine and woman and song.

Three things render us strong,
  Vine leaves, kisses and bay;
Yet is day over long.

Unto us they belong,
  Us the bitter and gay,
Wine and woman and song.

We, as we pass along,
  Are sad that they will not stay;
Yet is day over long.

Fruits and flowers among,
  What is better than they:
Wine and woman and song?
  Yet is day over long.

Ernest Dowson

VILLANELLE OF HIS LADY'S TREASURES

I took her dainty eyes, as well
  As silken tendrils of her hair:
And so I made a Villanelle!

I took her voice, a silver bell,
  As clear as song, as soft as prayer;
I took her dainty eyes as well.

"It may be," said I, "who can tell,"
  "These things shall be my less despair?"
And so I made a Villanelle!

I took her whiteness virginal
  And from her cheek two roses rare:
I took her dainty eyes as well.

I said: "It may be possible
  Her image from my heart to tear!"
And so I made a Villanelle.

I stole her laugh, most musical:
  I wrought it in with artful care;
I took her dainty eyes as well;
And so I made a Villanelle.

Ernest Dowson

PAN.—A VILLANELLE

O Goat-foot God of Arcady!
  Cyllene's shrine is grey and old;
This northern isle hath need of thee!

No more the shepherd lads in glee
  Throw apples at thy wattled fold,
O Goat-foot God of Arcady!

Nor through the laurels can one see
  Thy soft brown limbs, thy head of gold:
This northern isle hath need of thee!

Then leave the tomb of Helicé,
  Where nymph and faun lie dead and cold,
O Goat-foot God of Arcady;

For many an unsung elegy
  Sleeps in the reeds our rivers hold:
This northern isle hath need of thee.

And thine our English Thames shall be,
  The open lawns, the upland wold,
O Goat-foot God of Arcady,
  This northern isle hath need of thee!

Oscar Wilde

THEOCRITUS

O Singer of Persephone!
  In the dim meadows desolate,
Dost thou remember Sicily?

Still through the ivy flits the bee
  Where Amaryllis lies in state;
O Singer of Persephone!

Simætha calls on Hecate,
  And hears the wild dogs at the gate;
Dost thou remember Sicily?

Still by the light and laughing sea
  Poor Polypheme bemoans his fate;
O Singer of Persephone!

And still in boyish rivalry
  Young Daphnis challenges his mate;
Dost thou remember Sicily?

Slim Lacon keeps a goat for thee;
  For thee the jocund shepherds wait;
O Singer of Persephone!
Dost thou remember Sicily?

Oscar Wilde

VILLANELLE

The air is white with snowflakes clinging;
Between the gusts that come and go
Methinks I hear the woodlark singing.

Methinks I see the primrose springing
On many a bank and hedge, although
The air is white with snowflakes clinging.

Surely, the hands of Spring are flinging
Wood-scents to all the winds that blow:
Methinks I hear the woodlark singing.

Methinks I see the swallow winging
Across the woodlands sad with snow;
The air is white with snowflakes clinging.

Was that the cuckoo's wood-chime swinging?
Was that the linnet fluting low?
Methinks I hear the woodlark singing.

Or can it be the breeze is bringing
The breath of violets? Ah, no!
The air is white with snowflakes clinging.

It is my lady's voice that's stringing
Its beads of gold to song; and so
Methinks I hear the woodlark singing.

The violets I see upspringing
Are in my lady's eyes, I trow:
The air is white with snowflakes clinging.

Dear, whilst thy tender tones are ringing,
Even whilst amid the winter's woe
The air is white with snowflakes clinging,
Methinks I hear the woodlark singing.

John Payne

VILLANELLE

The thrush's singing days are fled
His heart is dumb for love and pain:
The nightingale shall sing instead.

Too long the wood-bird's heart hath bled
With love and dole at every vein:
The thrush's singing days are fled.

The music in his breast is dead,
His soul will never flower again:
The nightingale shall sing instead.

Love's rose has lost its early red,
The golden year is on the wane;
The thrush's singing days are fled.

The years have beaten down his head,
He's mute beneath the winter's rain:
The nightingale shall sing instead.

Hard use hath snapped the golden thread
Of all his wild-wood songs in twain;
The thrush's singing days are fled.

His voice is dumb for drearihead:
What matters it? In wood and lane
The nightingale shall sing instead.

Dear, weary not for what is sped.
What if, for stress of heart and brain,
The thrush's singing days are fled;
The nightingale shall sing instead.

John Payne

TO HESPERUS

(After Bion)

O jewel of the deep blue night,
  Too soon, to-day, the moon arose;
I pray thee, lend thy lovely light.

Than any other star more bright
  An hundredfold thy beauty glows,
O jewel of the deep blue night.

Too soon Selene gained the height,
  And now no more her glory shows;
I pray thee, lend *thy* lovely light.

Anon our revel of delight
  Towards the shepherd's dwelling goes,
O jewel of the deep blue night!

And I must lead the dance aright,
  Yea—even I—for me they chose:
I pray thee, lend thy lovely light.

No thief am I, nor evil wight,
  Nor numbered with the traveller's foes,
O jewel of the deep blue night!

None would I spoil, nor e'en affright;
  Mine are the Lover's joys and woes;
I pray thee, lend thy lovely light.

For good it is, in all men's sight
  (Thou knowest well), to favour those,
O jewel of the deep blue night!

Thy golden lamp hath turned to white
  The silver of the olive-close;
O jewel of the deep blue night!
I pray thee, lend thy lovely light.

Graham R. Tomson

JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET

O Master of the Old and New!
  We speak thy name with bated breath;
Thy waking years were all too few.

With airs that erst in Athens blew
  Thy toil's full harvest murmureth,
O Master of the Old and New!

In misty pastures, dim with dew,
  Thy sad, strong spirit slumbereth;
Thy waking years were all too few.

The forms thy potent pencil drew
  On sunset light move strong as Death,
O Master of the Old and New!

The sowing seasons turn anew,
  And toiling man continueth;
Thy waking years were all too few.

Dark Orcus veils thee from our view
  On vast, low meadow-lands of Death,
O Master of the Old and New.

Now men their tardy laurels strew,
  And Fame, remorseful, sobbing saith,
'O Master of the Old and New,
Thy waking years were all too few!'

Graham R. Tomson

VILLANELLE TO THE DAFFODIL

O daffodil, flower saffron-gowned,
  Effulgent with the Sun-god's gold,
Thou bring'st the joyous season round!

While yet the earth is blanched and browned
  Thou dost thy amber leaves unfold,
O daffodil, flower saffron-gowned.

We see thee by yon mossy mound
  Wave from thy stalks each pennon bold,—
Thou bring'st the joyous season round!

Fair child of April, promise-crowned,
  We longed for thee when winds were cold,
O daffodil, flower saffron-gowned.

Again we hear the merry sound
  Of sweet birds singing love-songs old,—
Thou bring'st the joyous season round!

Again we feel our hearts rebound
  With pleasures by thy birth foretold,—
O daffodil, flower saffron-gowned,
Thou bring'st the joyous season round!

Clinton Scollard

VILLANELLE TO HELEN

Man's very voice is stilled on Troas' shore,
  Sweet Xanthus and Simois both are mute,
Thus have the gods ordained forevermore!

Springs the rank weed where bloomed the rose before,
  Unplucked on Ida hangs the purple fruit,
Man's very voice is stilled on Troas' shore.

Where heavenly walls towered proud and high of yore,
  Unharmed now strays abroad the savage brute,
Thus have the gods ordained forevermore!

And they, the wronged, that wasting sorrow bore,
  Alas! their tree hath withered to the root,
Man's very voice is stilled on Troas' shore.

In Lacedæmon, loved of heroes hoar,
  No trumpet sounds, but piping shepherd's flute,
Thus have the gods ordained forevermore!

  And thou, the cause, through Aphrodite's lore,
  Unblamed, art praised on poet's lyre and lute—
Man's very voice is stilled on Troas' shore.
Thus have the gods ordained forevermore!

Clinton Scollard

LOVE, WHY SO LONG AWAY

Love, why so long away
  Beyond the hollow seas?
Return, return, I pray!

Though skies be wild and gray,
  And rill and fountain freeze,
Love, why so long away?

Ah, wait not till the May
  Shall bring the birds and bees!
Return, return, I pray!

Weirdly chill night and day
  The winds sob in the trees;
Love, why so long away?

I seem to hear them say
  Across snow-drifted leas,
"Return, return, I pray!"

And ever, sad as they,
  Calls echo down the breeze,
"*Return,—return,—I—pray!*"
Love, why so long away?

Clinton Scollard

A VILLANELLE OF LOVE

Ask not if Love no Passion knows,
Since kissing thee, I did desire
To hold thee like a flaming rose.

How should I reason well when glows
My memory of thee as a fire?
Ask not if Love no passion knows.

What wouldst thou then? that Love should close
His eager wings that would come nigher
To hold thee like a flaming rose?

When beauty from thy gaze yet flows
Like wind across my heart, a lyre,
Ask not if Love no passion knows.

That deep soft double flower that grows
Upon thy breast doth Love inspire
To hold thee like a flaming rose.

Is Love then less when Passion shows
Him how most sweetly to desire?
Ask not if Love no passion knows
To hold thee like a flaming rose!

R. L. Megroz

VILLANELLE

O fleet of foot as Artemis,
With silvern wings upon thy feet,
Why dost thou flee from lover's kiss?

Hast thou no other gift than this,
The slow sweet smile wherewith to greet,
O fleet of foot as Artemis?

And slim, cool fingers to dismiss
With farewell touch serene, discreet?
Why dost thou flee from lover's kiss?

E'en Dian (old the fancy is)
Once found a mortal's kisses sweet,
O fleet of foot as Artemis!

And stooped to taste of human bliss.
If she could leave her cloudy seat,
Why dost thou flee from lover's kiss?

Know'st thou not truth from artifice?
Ah! read my eyes when next we meet!
O fleet of foot as Artemis,
Why dost thou flee from lover's kiss?

Gareth Marsh Stanton

AT A BRETON SEA-BLESSING

(Breton Villanelle)

Oh, gentle Lady of God's sea,
  Lest faithless souls fear Saints asleep,
Bless sorrow-laden Brittany!

God's sea is full-fed; hungry we,
  Whose nets drag empty thro' the deep,
Oh, gentle Lady of God's sea!

God's sea is full-fed; hear the plea
  From starving flesh and blood so cheap:
"Bless sorrow-laden Brittany!"

God's sea is hungry; agony
  Shrills thro' the wind as widows weep,
Oh, gentle Lady of God's sea!

God's sea is hungry; hauntingly
  The children's wailings heav'nward sweep:
"Bless sorrow-laden Brittany!"

O Hope, O Help, we kneel to thee
  When wrecking breakers boom and leap:
"Oh, gentle Lady of God's sea,
  Bless sorrow-laden Brittany!"

Margaret Lovell Andrews

VILLANELLE

Last night in Memory's boughs aswing,
  When none but I had heart to hear,
A wee brown mavis tried to sing.

But, ah! the wild notes would not ring
  As once they rang—so loud and clear!
Last night in Memory's boughs aswing.

I saw the rowan-clusters cling,
  And far away and yet so near
A wee brown mavis tried to sing.

Almost I found a long-lost Spring,
  Almost the loves I held so dear,
Last night in Memory's boughs aswing

For joys that had their blossoming
  Beyond the grief of each gray year
A wee brown mavis tried to sing;

But the dew wrapped him, glistening,
  And every dew-drop told a tear
Last night in Memory's boughs aswing,

While, throbbing heart and dropping wing,
  And chill claws grasping at his bier,
A wee brown mavis tried to sing.

But I shall know when hailstorms sting,
  And not forget when leaves are sere,
Last night in Memory's boughs aswing
A wee brown mavis tried to sing.

Will H. Ogilvie

WHEN THE BROW OF JUNE

When the brow of June is crowned by the rose
  And the air is fain and faint with her breath,
Then the Earth hath rest from her long birth-throes;—

The Earth hath rest and forgetteth her woes
  As she watcheth the cradle of Love and Death,
When the brow of June is crowned by the rose.

O Love and Death who are counted for foes,
  She sees you twins of one mind and faith—
The Earth at rest from her long birth-throes.

You are twins to the mother who sees and knows;
  (Let them strive and thrive together) she saith—
When the brow of June is crowned by the rose.

They strive, and Love his brother outgrows,
  But for strength and beauty he travaileth
On the Earth at rest from her long birth-throes

And still when his passionate heart o'erflows,
  Death winds about him a bridal wreath—
As the brow of June is crowned by the rose!

So the bands of death true lovers enclose,
  For Love and Death are as Sword and Sheath
When the Earth hath rest from her long birth-throes.

They are Sword and Sheath, they are Life and its Shows
  Which lovers have grace to see beneath,
When the brow of June is crowned by the rose
And the Earth hath rest from her long birth-throes.

Emily Pfeiffer

ACROSS THE WORLD I SPEAK TO THEE

Across the world I speak to thee;
  Where'er thou art (I know not where),
Send thou a messenger to me!

I here remain, who would be free,
  To seek thee out through foul or fair,
Across the world I speak to thee.

Whether beneath the tropic tree,
  The cooling night wind fans thy hair,—
Send thou a messenger to me!

Whether upon the rushing sea,
  A foamy track thy keel doth wear,—
Across the world I speak to thee.

Whether in yonder star thou be,
  A spirit loosed in purple air,—
Send thou a messenger to me!

Hath Heaven not left thee memory
  Of what was well in mortal's share?
Across the world I speak to thee;
Send thou a messenger to me!

Edith M. Thomas

THE HOUSE ON THE HILL *

They are all gone away;
  The House is shut and still,
There is nothing more to say.

* From *The Children of the Night.* Copyright 1896-1897 by Edwin Arlington Robinson. Published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Through broken walls and gray
  The winds blow bleak and shrill:
They are all gone away.

Nor is there one to-day
  To speak them good or ill:
There is nothing more to say.

Why is it then we stray
  Around that sunken sill?
They are all gone away,

And our poor fancy-play
  For them is wasted skill:
There is nothing more to say.

There is ruin and decay
  In the House on the Hill:
They are all gone away,
There is nothing more to say.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

MY DEAD DOGS

(Villanelle)

Dear, faithful beasts who went before—
  Who swam Death's river undismayed—
I'll find them on the further shore!

When Charon grimly rows me o'er
  Vixen will bark and Jack who stayed—
Dear, faithful beasts who went before!

Rover will gambol more and more,
  And Roy, the shy, be unafraid,—
I'll find them on the further shore!

Sweet Clyde again shall guard my door,
  And Wasp be near my footstool laid,—
Dear, faithful beasts who went before!

Death shall their precious love restore,
  Their emerald eyes will light the Shade;
I'll find them on the further shore!

For ever, then, shall they outpour
  Affection which can never fade;
Dear, faithful beasts who went before,—
I'll find them on the further shore!

Rowland Thirlmere

VILLANELLE OF CITY AND COUNTRY

Beneath the arches of the leaves I lie,
  And watch the Lovers wander—Song and Spring—
But oh, the towers set in Gotham's sky!

A great triangle shaft uplifts on high
  Its columned shrine wherein the presses sing;
Beneath the arches of the leaves I lie.

With flocks of clouds the Shepherd-wind goes by,
  White poppies 'mid the waving grasses swing—
But oh, the towers set in Gotham's sky!

As to a fairy castle we draw nigh
  When home the ferries bear us, marvelling;
Beneath the arches of the leaves I lie.

Across the empty fields the trumpets die
  That meadow larks unto the morning fling—
But oh, the towers set in Gotham's sky!

Far off I hear the city's aching cry,
  Where Life and Death are Lovers, wandering;
Beneath the arches of the leaves I lie,
But oh, the towers set in Gotham's sky!

Zoe Akins

LUGUBRIOUS VILLANELLE OF PLATITUDES

Eheu fugaces, Postume.—Horace. Book II: Ode 14

Ah, Postumus, my Postumus, the years are slipping by;
Old age with hurrying footsteps draws nearer day by day;
And we will leave this friendly earth and every friendlier tie.

Soon Death, whose strength is never spent, whose sword is always high,
Will beckon us, and all our faith will win us no delay.
Ah, Postumus, my Postumus, the years are slipping by.

Grim Pluto waits for all of us; he waits with pitiless eye,
Until we journey down the stream that carries us away;
And we will leave this friendly earth and every friendlier tie.

Though we be kings or worse than slaves, the eager moments fly;
Though we be purer than the gods, Time will not halt or stay—
Ah, Postumus, my Postumus, the years are slipping by.

Aye, we must go, though we have shunned the red sun of July,
The bitter winds, the treacherous surf, the blind and savage fray,
And we will leave this friendly earth and every friendlier tie.

Too soon the stubborn hand of Fate tears all our dreams awry;
Too soon the plowman quits his plow, the child his happy play—
Ah, Postumus, my Postumus, the years are slipping by,
And we will leave this friendly earth and every friendlier tie.

Louis Untermeyer

VILLANELLE, WITH STEVENSON'S ASSISTANCE

The world is so full of a number of things
  Like music and pictures and statues and plays,
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

We've winters and summers and autumns and springs,
  We've Aprils and Augusts, Octobers and Mays—
The world is so full of a number of things.

Though minor the key of my lyrical strings,
  I change it to major when pæaning praise:
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

Each morning a myriad wonderments brings,
  Each evening a myriad marvels conveys,
The world is so full of a number of things.

With pansies and roses and pendants and rings,
  With purples and yellows and scarlets and grays,
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

So pardon a bard if he carelessly sings
  A solo indorsing these Beautiful Days—
The world is so full of a number of things,
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

Franklin P. Adams

SESTINAS

SESTINA

Fra tutti il primo Arnaldo Daniello
Gran maestro d'amor.—*Petrarch.*

In fair Provence, the land of lute and rose,
Arnaut, great master of the lore of love,
First wrought sestines to win his lady's heart,
Since she was deaf when simpler staves he sang,
And for her sake he broke the bonds of rhyme,
And in this subtler measure hid his woe.

"Harsh be my lines," cried Arnaut, "harsh the woe
My lady, that enthorn'd and cruel rose,
Inflicts on him that made her live in rhyme!"
But through the metre spake the voice of Love,
And like a wild-wood nightingale he sang
Who thought in crabbed lays to ease his heart.

It is not told if her untoward heart
Was melted by her poet's lyric woe,
Or if in vain so amorously he sang;
Perchance through cloud of dark conceits he rose
To nobler heights of philosophic love,
And crowned his later years with sterner rhyme.

This thing alone we know: the triple rhyme
Of him who bared his vast and passionate heart
To all the crossing flames of hate and love,
Wears in the midst of all its storm of woe,—
As some loud morn of March may bear a rose, —
The impress of a song that Arnaut sang.

"Smith of his mother-tongue," the Frenchman sang
Of Lancelot and of Galahad, the rhyme
That beat so bloodlike at its core of rose,
It stirred the sweet Francesca's gentle heart
To take that kiss that brought her so much woe
And sealed in fire her martyrdom of love.

And Dante, full of her immortal love,
Stayed his drear song, and softly, fondly sang
As though his voice broke with that weight of woe;
And to this day we think of Arnaut's rhyme
Whenever pity at the labouring heart
On fair Francesca's memory drops the rose.

Ah! sovereign Love, forgive this weaker rhyme!
The men of old who sang were great at heart,
Yet have we too known woe, and worn thy rose.

Edmund Gosse

THE CONQUEROR PASSES

"Non dormatz plus! les messatges de douz pascor"
—*Raimbaut de Vaqueiras.*

Awaken! for the servitors of Spring
Proclain his triumph! oh, make haste to see
With what tempestuous pageantry they bring
The victor homeward! haste, for this is he
That cast out Winter, and all woes that cling
To Winter's garments, and bade April be!

And now that Spring is master, let us be
Content, and laugh as anciently in spring
The battle-wearied Tristan laughed, when he
Was come again Tintagel-ward, to bring
Glad news of Arthur's victory—and see
Ysoude, with parted lips that waver and cling.

Not yet in Brittany must Tristan cling
To this or that sad memory, and be
Alone, as she in Cornwall; for in spring
Love sows against far harvestings,—and he
Is blind, and scatters baleful seed that bring
Such fruitage as blind Love lacks eyes to see.

Love sows, but lovers reap; and ye will see
The loved eyes lighten, feel the loved lips cling,
Never again when in the grave ye be
Incurious of your happiness in spring,
And get no grace of Love there, whither he
That bartered life for love no love may bring.

No braggart Heracles avails to bring
Alcestis hence; nor here may Roland see
The eyes of Aude; nor here the wakening spring
Vex any man with memories; for there be
No memories that cling as cerements cling,
No force that baffles Death, more strong than he.

Us hath he noted, and for us hath he
An hour appointed; and that hour will bring
Oblivion.—Then laugh! Laugh, dear, and see
The tyrant mocked, while yet our bosoms cling,
While yet our lips obey us, and we be
Untrammeled in our little hour of spring!

Thus in the spring we jeer at Death, though he
Will see our children perish, and will bring
Asunder all that cling while love may be.

James Branch Cabell

RIZZIO'S LOVE-SONG

Love with shut wings, a little ungrown love,
A blind lost love, alit on my shut heart,
As on an unblown rose an unfledged dove;
Feeble the flight as yet, feeble the flower.
And I said, show me if sleep or love thou art,
Or death or sorrow or some obscurer power;

Show me thyself, if thou be some such power,
If thou be god or spirit, sorrow or love,
That I may praise thee for the thing thou art.
And saying, I felt my soul a sudden flower
Full-fledged of petals, and thereon a dove
Sitting full-feathered, singing at my heart.

Yet the song's burden heavier on my heart
Than a man's burden laid on a child's power.
Surely most bitter of all sweet things thou art,
And sweetest thou of all things bitter, love;
And if a poppy or if a rose thy flower
We know not, nor if thou be kite or dove.

But nightingale is none nor any dove
That sings so long nor is so hot of heart
For love of sorrow or sorrow of any love;
Nor all thy pain hath any or all thy power,
Nor any knows thee if bird or god thou art,
Or whether a thorn to think thee or whether a flower.

But surely will I hold thee a glorious flower,
And thy tongue surely sweeter than the dove
Muttering in mid leaves from a fervent heart
Something divine of some exceeding love,
If thou being god out of a great god's power
Wilt make me also the glad thing thou art.

Will no man's mercy show me where thou art,
That I may bring thee of all my fruit and flower,
That with loud lips and with a molten heart
I may sing all thy praises, till the dove
That I desire to have within my power
Fly at thy bidding to my bosom, love?

Clothed as with power of pinions, O my heart,
Fly like a dove, and seek one sovereign flower,
Whose thrall thou art, and sing for love of love.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

THE COMPLAINT OF LISA

(Double Sestina)

Decameron, x. 7

There is no woman living that draws breath
So sad as I, though all things sadden her.
There is not one upon life's weariest way
Who is weary as I am weary of all but death.
Toward whom I look as looks the sunflower
All day with his whole soul toward the sun;
While in the sun's sight I make moan all day,
And all night on my sleepless maiden bed
Weep and call out on death, O Love, and thee,
That thou or he would take me to the dead,
And know not what thing evil I have done
That life should lay such heavy hand on me.

Alas, Love, what is this thou wouldst with me?
What honor shalt thou have to quench my breath,
Or what shall my heart broken profit thee?
O Love, O great god Love, what have I done,
That thou shouldst hunger so after my death?
My heart is harmless as my life's first day:
Seek out some false fair woman, and plague her
Till her tears even as my tears fill her bed:
I am the least flower in thy flowery way,
But till my time be come that I be dead
Let me live out my flower-time in the sun
Though my leaves shut before the sunflower.

O Love, Love, Love, the kingly sunflower!
Shall he the sun hath looked on look on me,
That live down here in shade, out of the sun,
Here living in the sorrow and shadow of death?
Shall he that feeds his heart full of the day
Care to give mine eyes light, or my lips breath?
Because she loves him shall my lord love her
Who is as a worm in my lord's kingly way?

I shall not see him or know him alive or dead;
But thou, I know thee, O Love, and pray to thee
That in brief while my brief life-days be done,
And the worm quickly make my marriage-bed.

For underground there is no sleepless bed:
But here since I beheld my sunflower
These eyes have slept not, seeing all night and day
His sunlike eyes, and face fronting the sun.
Wherefore if anywhere be any death,
I would fain find and fold him fast to me,
That I may sleep with the world's eldest dead,
With her that died seven centuries since, and her
That went last night down the night-wandering way.
For this is sleep indeed, when labor is done,
Without love, without dreams, and without breath,
And without thought, O name unnamed! of thee.

Ah, but, forgetting all things, shall I thee?
Wilt thou not be as now about my bed,
There underground as here before the sun?
Shall not thy vision vex me alive and dead,
Thy moving vision without form or breath?
I read long since the bitter tale of her
Who read the tale of Launcelot on a day,
And died, and had no quiet after death,
But was moved ever along a weary way,
Lost with her love in the underworld; ah me,
O my king, O my lordly sunflower,
Would God to me too such a thing were done!

But if such sweet and bitter things be done,
Then, flying from life, I shall not fly from thee.
For in that living world without a sun
Thy vision will lay hold upon me dead,
And meet and mock me, and mar my peace in death.
Yet if being wroth God had such pity on her,
Who was a sinner and foolish in her day,
That even in hell they twain should breathe one breath,
Why should he not in some wise pity me?

So if I sleep not in my soft strait bed
I may look up and see my sunflower
As he the sun, in some divine strange way.

O poor my heart, well knowest thou in what way
This sore sweet evil unto us was done.
For on a holy and a heavy day
I was risen out of my still small bed
To see the knights tilt, and one said to me
'The king,' and seeing him, somewhat stopped my breath,
And if the girl spake more, I heard not her,
For only I saw what I shall see when dead,
A kingly flower of knights, a sunflower,
That shown against the sunlight like the sun,
And like a fire, O heart, consuming thee,
The fire of love that lights the pyre of death.

Howbeit I shall not die an evil death
Who have loved in such a sad and sinless way,
That this my love, lord, was no shame to thee.
So when mine eyes are shut against the sun,
O my soul's sun, O the world's sunflower,
Thou nor no man will quite despise me dead.
And dying I pray with all my low last breath
That thy whole life may be as was that day,
That feast-day that made troth-plight death and me,
Giving the world light of thy great deeds done;
And that fair face brightening thy bridal bed,
That God be good as God hath been to her.

That all things goodly and glad remain with her,
All things that make glad life and goodly death;
That as a bee sucks from a sunflower
Honey, when summer draws delighted breath,
Her soul may drink of thy soul in like way,
And love make life a fruitful marriage-bed
Where day may bring forth fruits of joy to day
And night to night till days and nights be dead.

And as she gives light of her love to thee,
Give thou to her the old glory of days long done;
And either give some heat of light to me,
To warm me where I sleep without the sun.

O sunflower made drunken with the sun,
O knight whose lady's heart draws thine to her,
Great king, glad lover, I have a word to thee.
There is a weed lives out of the sun's way,
Hid from the heat deep in the meadow's bed,
That swoons and whitens at the wind's least breath,
A flower star-shaped, that all a summer day
Will gaze her soul out on the sunflower
For very love till twilight finds her dead.
But the great sunflower heeds not her poor death,
Knows not when all her loving life is done;
And so much knows my lord the king of me.

Aye, all day long he has no eye for me;
With golden eye following the golden sun
From rose-colored to purple-pillowed bed,
From birthplace to the flame-lit place of death,
From eastern end to western of his way.
So mine eye follows thee, my sunflower,
So the white star-flower turns and yearns to thee,
The sick weak weed, not well alive or dead,
Trod underfoot if any pass by her,
Pale, without color of summer or summer breath
In the shrunk shuddering petals, that have done
No work but love, and die before the day.

But thou, to-day, to-morrow, and every day,
Be glad and great, O love whose love slays me.
Thy fervent flower made fruitful from the sun
Shall drop its golden seed in the world's way,
That all men thereof nourished shall praise thee
For grain and flower and fruit of works well done;
Till thy shed seed, O shining sunflower,
Bring forth such growth of the world's garden-bed

As like the sun shall outlive age and death,
And yet I would thine heart had heed of her
Who loves thee alive; but not till she be dead.
Come, Love, then, quickly, and take her utmost breath.

Song, speak for me who am dumb as are the dead;
From my sad bed of tears I send forth thee,
To fly all day from sun's birth to sun's death
Down the sun's way after the flying sun,
For love of her that gave thee wings and breath
Ere day be done, to seek the sunflower.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

SESTINA

I saw my soul at rest upon a day
  As the bird sleeping in the nest of night,
Among soft leaves that give the starlight way
  To touch its wings but not its eyes with light;
So that it knew as one in visions may,
  And knew not as men waking, of delight.

This was the measure of my soul's delight;
  It had no power of joy to fly by day,
Nor part in the large lordship of the light;
  But in a secret moon-beholden way
Had all its will of dreams and pleasant night,
  And all the love and life that sleepers may.

But such life's triumph as men waking may
  It might not have to feed its faint delight
Between the stars by night and sun by day
  Shut up with green leaves and a little light;
Because its way was as a lost star's way.
  A world's not wholly known of day or night.

All loves and dreams and sounds and gleams of night
  Made it all music that such minstrels may,
And all they had they gave it of delight;
  But in the full face of the fire of day

What place shall be for any starry light,
  What part of heaven in all the wide sun's way?

Yet the soul woke not, sleeping by the way,
  Watched as a nursling of the large-eyed night,
And sought no strength nor knowledge of the day,
  Nor closer touch conclusive of delight,
Nor mightier joy nor truer than dreamers may,
  Nor more of song than they, nor more of light.

For who sleeps once and sees the secret light
  Whereby sleep shows the soul a fairer way
Between the rise and rest of day and night,
  Shall care no more to fare as all men may,
But be his place of pain or of delight,
  There shall he dwell, beholding night as day.

Song, have thy day and take thy fill of light
  Before the night be fallen across thy way;
Sing while he may, man hath no long delight.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

PULVIS ET UMBRA

(A Sestina)

Along the crowded streets I walk and think—
How I, a shadow, pace among the shades,
For I and all men seem to me unreal:
Foam that the seas of God which cover all
Cast on the air a moment, shadows thrown
In moving westward by the Moon of Death.

Oh, shall it set at last, that orb of Death?
May any morning follow? As I think,
From one surmise upon another thrown,
My very thoughts appear to me as shades—
Shades, like the prisoning self that bounds them all,
Shades, like the transient world, and as unreal.

But other hours there be when I, unreal,
When only I, vague in a conscious Death,
Move through the mass of men unseen by all;
I move along their ways, I feel and think,
Yet am more light than echoes, or the shades
That hide me, from their stronger bodies thrown.

And better moments come, when, overthrown
All round me, lie the ruins of the unreal
And momentary world, as thin as shades;
When I alone, triumphant over Death,
Eternal, vast, fill with the thoughts I think,
And with my single soul the frame of all.

Ah, for a moment could I grasp it all!
Ah, could but I (poor wrestler often thrown)
Once grapple with the truth, oh then, I think,
Assured of which is living, which unreal,
I would not murmur, though among the shades
My lot were cast, among the shades and Death.

"One thing is true," I said, "and that is Death,"
And yet it may be God disproves it all;
And Death may be a passage from the shades,
And films on our beclouded senses thrown;
And Death may be a step beyond the Unreal
Towards the Thought that answers all I think.

In vain I think. O moon-like thought of Death,
All is unreal beneath thee, uncertain all,
Dim moon-ray thrown along a world of shades.

A. Mary F. Robinson

CUPID AND THE SHEPHERD

(Sestina)

One merry morn when all the earth was bright,
And flushed with dewy dawn's encrimsoning ray,

A shepherd youth, o'er whose fair face the light
  Of rosy smiles was ever wont to stray,
Roamed through a level grassy mead, bedight
  With springtime blossoms, fragrant, fresh, and gay.

But now, alas! his mood was far from gay;
  And musing how the dark world would be bright
Could he but win his maiden's love, and stray
  With her forever, basking in its light,
He saw afar, in morn's bright-beaming ray,
  A lissome boy with archer's arms bedight.

The boy shot arrows at a tree bedight
  With red-winged songsters warbling sweet and gay
Amid the leaves and blossoms blooming bright,
  He seemed an aimless, wandering waif astray,
And so the shepherd caught him, stealing light,
  While from his eyes he flashed an angry ray.

The fair boy plead until a kindly ray
  Shone o'er the shepherd's clouded brow, bedight
With clustering locks, and he said, smiling gay,
  "I prithee promise, by thy face so bright,
To ne'er again, where'er thou mayest stray,
  Slay the sweet birds that make so glad the light."

While yet he spoke, from out those eyes a light
  Divine shot forth, before whose glowing ray
The shepherd quailed, it was so wondrous bright;
  Then well he knew 'twas Cupid coy and gay,
With all his arts and subtle wiles bedight,
  And knelt in homage lest the boy should stray.

"Rise," said the God, "and ere thy footsteps stray,
  Know that within her eyes where beamed no light
Of love for thee, I will implant a ray.
  She shall be thine with all her charms bedight."
The shepherd kissed Love's hand, then bounded gay
  To gain his bliss,—and all the world was bright.

When naught is bright to those that sadly stray,
  Ofttimes a single ray of Eros' light
Will make all earth bedight with radiance gay.

Clinton Scollard

SESTINA OF YOUTH AND AGE

My father died when I was all too young,
And he too old, too crowded with his care,
For me to know he knew my hot fierce hopes;
Youth sees wide chasms between itself and Age—
How could I think he, too, had lived my life?
My dreams were all of war, and his of rest.

And so he sleeps (please God), at last at rest,
And, it may be, with soul refreshed, more young
Than when he left me, for that other life—
Free, for a while, at least, from that old Care,
The hard, relentless torturer of his age,
That cooled his youth, and bridled all his hopes.

For now I know he had the longing hopes,
The wild desires of youth, and all the rest
Of my ambitions ere he came to age;
He, too, was bold, when he was free and young—
Had I but known that he could feel, and care!
How could I know the secret of his life?

In my own youth I see his early life
So reckless, and so full of flaming hopes—
I see him jubilant, without a care,
The days too short, and grudging time for rest;
He knew the wild delight of being young—
Shall I, too, know the calmer joys of age?

His words come back, to mind me of that age
When, lovingly, he watched my broadening life—
And, dreaming of the days when he was young,
Smiled at my joys, and shared my fears and hopes.

His words still live, for in my heart they rest,
Too few not to be kept with jealous care!

Ah, little did I know how he could care!
That, in my youth, lay joys to comfort age!
Not in this world, for him, was granted rest,
But as he lived, in me, a happier life,
He prayed more earnestly to win my hopes
Than ever for his own, when he was young!

ENVOY

He once was young; I too must fight with Care;
He knew my hopes, and I must share his age;
God grant my life be worthy, too, of rest!

Gelett Burgess

SESTINA OF THE TRAMP-ROYAL

Speakin' in general, I 'ave tried 'em all,
The 'appy roads that take you o'er the world.
Speakin' in general, I 'ave found them good
For such as cannot use one bed too long,
But must get 'ence, the same as I 'ave done,
An' go observin' matters till they die.

What do it matter where or 'ow we die,
So long as we've our 'ealth to watch it all—
The different ways that different things are done,
An' men an' women lovin' in this world—
Takin' our chances as they come along,
An' when they ain't, pretendin' they are good?

In cash or credit—no, it ain't no good;
You 'ave to 'ave the 'abit or you'd die,
Unless you lived your life but one day long,
Nor didn't prophesy nor fret at all,
But drew your tucker some'ow from the world,
An' never bothered what you might ha' done.

But, Gawd, what things are they I 'aven't done?
I've turned my 'and to most, an' turned it good,
In various situations round the world—
For 'im that doth not work must surely die;
But that's no reason man should labour all
'Is life on one same shift; life's none so long.

Therefore, from job to job I've moved along.
Pay couldn't 'old me when my time was done,
For something in my 'ead upset me all,
Till I 'ad dropped whatever 'twas for good,
An', out at sea, be'eld the dock-lights die,
An' met my mate—the wind that tramps the world.

It's like a book, I think, this bloomin' world,
Which you can read and care for just so long,
But presently you feel that you will die
Unless you get the page you're readin' done,
An' turn another—likely not so good;
But what you're after is to turn 'em all.

Gawd bless this world! Whatever she 'ath done—
Excep' when awful long—I've found it good.
So write, before I die, " 'E liked it all!"

Rudyard Kipling

PARODIES AND BURLESQUES

A BALLADE OF BALLADE-MONGERS

(After the manner of Master François Villon of Paris)

In Ballades things always contrive to get lost,
  And Echo is constantly asking where
Are last year's roses and last year's frost?
  And where are the fashions we used to wear?
And what is a "gentleman," and what is a "player"?
  Irrelevant questions I like to ask:
Can you reap the *tret* as well as the *tare?*
  And who was the Man in the Iron Mask?

What has become of the ring I tossed
  In the lap of my mistress false and fair?
Her grave is green and her tombstone mossed;
  But who is to be the next Lord Mayor?
And where is King William, of Leicester Square?
  And who has emptied my hunting flask?
And who is possessed of Stella's hair?
  And who was the Man in the Iron Mask?

And what became of the knee I crossed,
  And the rod, and the child they would not spare?
And what will a dozen herring cost
  When herring are sold at three halfpence a pair?
And what in the world is the Golden Stair?
  Did Diogenes die in a tub or cask,
Like Clarence, for love of liquor there?
  And who was the Man in the Iron Mask?

ENVOY

Poets, your readers have much to bear,
  For Ballade-making is no great task,
If you do not remember, I don't much care
  Who was the man in the Iron Mask.

Augustus M. Moore

THE PRODIGALS

(Dedicated to Mr. Chaplin, M. P., and Mr. Richard Power, M. P., and 223 who followed them)

Ministers! you, most serious,
  Critics and statesmen of all degrees,
Hearken awhile to the motion of us—
  Senators keen for the Epsom breeze!
  Nothing we ask of posts or fees;
Worry us not with objections, pray!
  Lo, for the speaker's wig we seize—
Give us, ah! give us the Derby Day.

Scots most prudent, penurious!
  Irishmen busy as bumblebees!
Hearken awhile to the motion of us—
  Senators keen for the Epsom breeze!
  For Sir Joseph's sake, and his owner's, please!
(Solomon raced like fun, they say.)
  Lo, for we beg on our bended knees—
Give us, ah! give us the Derby Day.

Campbell—Asheton be generous!
  (But they voted such things were not the cheese.)
Sullivan, hear us, magnanimous!
  (But Sullivan thought with their enemies.)
  And shortly they got both of help and ease,
For a mad majority crowded to say
  "Debate we've drunk to the dregs and lees:
Give us, ah! give us the Derby Day."

ENVOI

Prince, most just was the motion of these,
  And many were seen by the dusty way,
Shouting glad to the Epsom breeze
  Give us, ah! give us the Derby Day.

Anonymous

AUSTIN DOBSON

Recites a *Ballade by Way of Retort* *

("Anna's the name of names for me.")
—*W. E. Henley.*

"Anna"! Insipid and weak as gruel—
"Anna"! As flat as last night's beer—
Plain as a bed-post and stiff as a newel,
Surely there's nothing of glamour here!
Names by the hundred enchant the ear,
Stirring the heart with melodious claims;
Arrogant, timid, impulsive, and dear—
Rose, after all, is the name of names.

Sally gleams like a laughing jewel,
Bella's jovial, Maud's austere;
Rachel's complacent, Lydia's cruel,
Laura is classical, Fanny is queer.
Peggy reminds one of rustic cheer,
Lucy of lilies and lofty aims,
Lola of fancies that shift and veer—
Rose, after all, is the name of names.

Sara's a fire for all men's fuel,
Mary's a comfort for all men's fear,
Helen's the smile that invites the duel,
Chloë's the breath of a yesteryear,
Margaret somehow invokes the tear,
Lilith the thought of a thousand shames;
Clara is cool as a lake and clear—
Rose, after all, is the name of names.

* From —*and Other Poets*, by Louis Untermeyer. Copyright 1916, Henry Holt and Company, Publishers.

ENVOY

Hannah's for home and the 'woman's sphere';
  Vivian's all for dances and games;
Julia's imperious, Kate is sincere—
  Rose (after all) is the Name of Names!

Louis Untermeyer

CONTRIBUTED BY MR. ANDREW LANG

Unhappy is Bo-Peep,
  Her tears profusely flow,
Because her precious sheep
  Have wandered to and fro,
  Have chosen far to go,
For 'pastures new' inclined,
  (See *Lycidas*)—and lo!
Their tails are still behind!

How catch them while asleep?
  (I think Gaboriau
For machinations deep
  Beats Conan Doyle and Co.)
  But none a hint bestow
Save this, on how to find
  The flock she misses so—
"Their tails are still behind!"

This simple faith to keep
  Will mitigate her woe,
She is not Joan, to leap
  To arms against the foe
Or conjugate τίπτω;
Nay, peacefully resigned
  She waits till time shall show
Their tails are still behind!

Bo-Peep, rejoice! Although
Your sheep appear unkind,
Rejoice at least to know
Their tails are still behind!

Anthony C. Deane

TRIOLET AND BALLADE FROM "THE HEAVEN ABOVE STORYSENDE"

Then up spoke the last and youngest leader of them, sweeping a *viola d'amore* that had but one string. His face was smooth and more asexual than an angel's and his thick hair shone like a tossing golden flame. Sang this one:

"Goodness and beauty and truth . . . Where? Well, but only in song? . . . Honor, Nobility, Youth, Goodness and Beauty—and Truth—shrink from man's clutches. In sooth, no man can hold them for long. . . . Goodness and Beauty and Truth wear well. But only in song!"

"A skeptical though neatly-joined triolet," smiled Ortnitz. "But you talk in riddles, my fine young poet, for all your cynically smooth generalities. Yet why should I desist? And for what, more specifically would you have me abandon my quest for truth, justice and those ultimates which are the pavement and the pillars of heaven?"

Thus answered the minstrel:

"I offer you more than earthly riches in coin that none but the poet pays:—Freedom from all the stings and itches of every trivial splutter and blaze; a cup of healing; a stirrup of praise; a mood to meet the challenge of pleasure; a lilt to the feet of dragging days—all in the heart of a minstrel's measure."

Said Ortnitz: "That is much indeed to promise."

But the youth continued:

"I offer you more. I offer you riches where a sour world's grumbling never strays; where ripples a mirthful music which is an echo of man's first laughter that plays in various keys and secret ways. There still is a land of Light and Leisure (if you will pardon so mouldy a phrase) all in the heart of a minstrel's measure."

Said Ortnitz: "A great deal, to be sure. At the same

time—" His interjection was interrupted by the poet who pursued his rhapsody, crying:

"I offer all that ever bewitches the mind of man from its yeas and nays. To the poet, immortal hemistiches; to the soldier, conquest crowned with bays; to the lover, the breath of a thousand Mays; to the boy, a jingle of buried treasure; to the cheated and broken, a merciful haze. All in the heart of a minstrel's measure.

"Master, I offer what never decays though all else wither. Master, what says your will to the magics that quicken and raise all in the heart of a minstrel's measure?"

Louis Untermeyer

BALLADE OF INCIPIENT LUNACY *

Scene.—A Battalion "Orderly" Room in France during a period of "Rest." Runners arrive breathlessly from all directions bearing illegible chits, and tear off in the same directions with illegible answers or no answers at all. Motor-bicycles snort up to the door, and arrogant dispatch-riders enter with enormous envelopes containing leagues of correspondence, orders, minutes, circulars, maps, signals, lists, schedules, summaries, and all sorts. The tables are stacked with papers; the floor is littered with papers; papers fly through the air. Two typewriters click with maddening insistence in a corner. A signaller "buzzes" tenaciously at the telephone, talking in a strange language, apparently to himself, as he never seems to be connected with anyone else. A stream of miscellaneous persons—quartermasters, chaplains, generals, batmen, D. A. D. O. S.'s, sergeant-majors, staff officers, buglers, Maires, officers just arriving, officers just going away, gas experts, bombing experts, interpreters, doctors—drifts in, wastes time, and drifts out again.

Clerks scribble ceaselessly, rolls and nominal rolls, nominal lists and lists. By the time they have finished one list it is long out of date. Then they start the next. Everything happens at the same time; nobody has time to finish a sentence. Only a military mind with a very limited descriptive

* From *The Bomber Gipsy*, by A. P. Herbert. Copyright 1920 by Alfred A. Knopf, Publisher.

vocabulary and a chronic habit of self-deception, would call the place orderly.

The Adjutant speaks hoarsely; while he speaks he writes, about something quite different. In the middle of each sentence his pipe goes out; at the end of each sentence he lights a match. He may or may not light his pipe; anyhow he speaks:—

"Where is that list of Weslyans I made?
And what are all those people on the stair?
Is that my pencil? Well, they *can't* be paid.
Tell the Marines we have no forms to spare.
I cannot get these Ration States to square.
The Brigadier is coming round, they say.
The Colonel wants a man to cut his hair.
I think I *must* be going mad to-day.

"These silly questions! I shall tell Brigade
This office is now closing for repair.
They want to know what Mr. Johnstone weighed,
And if the Armourer is dark or fair?
I do not know; I cannot say I care.
Tell that interpreter to go away.
Where is my signal pad? I left it there.
I think I *must* be going mad to-day.

"Perhaps I should appear upon parade.
Where is my pencil? Ring up Captain Aire.
Say I regret our tools have been mislaid.
These companies would make Sir Douglas swear.
'A' is the worst. Oh, damn, is this the *Maire?*
I'm sorry, Monsieur—*je suis désolé*—
But no one's pinched your miserable chair.
I think I *must* be going mad to-day.

ENVOI

"Prince, I perceive what Cain's temptations were,
And how attractive it must be to slay.
O Lord, the General! This is hard to bear.
I think I *must* be going mad to-day."

A. P. Herbert

BALLADE OF DOTTINESS

A cow, delighted, blew her horn,
  The pines stopped pining and were gay,
The weeping willows ceased to mourn,
  A donkey, thrilled, began to bray,
  The sun released a brilliant ray,
The birds pronounced a benediction,
  As John and Helen kissed that day—
Oh, for an end of dotty fiction!

You laugh my parody to scorn?
  That I exaggerate, you say?
Well, read "The Rose Without a Thorn"
  And you'll accept my roundelay,
  Especially when in dismay
Spurned Julius cries his sore affliction,
  "Men are but things with which you play!"—
Oh, for an end of dotty fiction!

Dear Novelists, since I was born
  I've watched the fictional decay,
And resolutely I have sworn
  A fictionist or two to slay.
  Ye second raters, run away
Before you feel a tight constriction
  About your gizzards! (Kneel and pray!)
Oh, for an end of dotty fiction!

L'ENVOI

  How can the publishers defray
The punctuation bills? . . . "Conviction
  Faced Doyle. . . . He wept. . . . I saw him
    sway. . . ."
Oh, for an end of *dotty* fiction!

Edward Anthony

THE BALLADE OF THE SUMMER-BOARDER

Let all men living on earth take heed,
  For their own souls' sake, to a rhyme well meant;
Writ so that he who runs may read—
  We are the folk that a-summering went.
  Who while the year was young were bent—
Yea, bent on doing this self-same thing
  Which we have done unto some extent.
This is the end of our summering.

We are the folk who would fain be freed
  From wasteful burdens of rate and rent—
From the vampire agents' ravening breed—
  We are the folk that a-summering went.
  We hied us forth when the summer was blent
With the fresh faint sweetness of dying spring,
  A-seeking the meadows dew-besprent
This is the end of our summering.

For O the waiters that must be fee'd,
  And our meat-time neighbour, the travelling "gent;"
And the youth next door with the ophicleide!
  We are the folk that a-summering went!
  Who from small bare rooms wherein we were pent,
While birds their way to the southward wing,
  Come back, our money for no good spent—
This is the end of our summering.

ENVOY

Citizens! list to our sore lament—
  While the landlord's hands to our raiment cling—
We are the folk that a-summering went:
  This is the end of our summering.

H. C. Bunner

ON NEWPORT BEACH

(Rondeau)

On Newport beach there ran right merrily,
In dainty navy blue clothed to the knee,
  Thence to the foot in white *au naturel*,
  A little maid. Fair was she, truth to tell,
As Oceanus' child Callirrhoë.
In the soft sand lay one small shell, its wee
Keen scallops tinct with faint hues, such as be
  In girlish cheeks. In some old storm it fell
  On Newport Beach.

There was a bather of the species *he*,
Who saw the little maid go toward the sea;
  Rushing to help her through the billowy swell,
  He set his sole upon the little shell,
And heaped profanely phrased obloquy
  On Newport Beach.

H. C. Bunner

CULTURE IN THE SLUMS

(Inscribed to an Intense Poet)

I. RONDEAU

"O crikey, Bill!" she ses to me, she ses.
  "Look sharp," ses she, "with them there sossiges.
Yea! sharp with them there bags of mysteree!
For lo!" she ses, "for lo! old pal," ses she,
  "I'm blooming peckish, neither more nor less."

Was it not prime—I leave you all to guess
How prime!—to have a jude in love's distress
  Come spooning round, and murmuring balmilee,
  "O crikey, Bill!"

For in such rorty wise doth Love express
His blooming views, and asks for your address,
  And makes it right, and does the gay and free.
  I kissed her—I did so! And her and me
Was pals. And if that ain't good business,
                O crikey, Bill!

II. VILLANELLE

Now ain't they utterly too-too
  (She ses, my Missus mine,* ses she),
Them flymy little bits of Blue.

Joe, just you kool 'em—nice and skew
  Upon our old meogginee,
Now ain't they utterly too-too?

They're better than a pot'n' a screw,
  They're equal to a Sunday spree,
Them flymy little bits of Blue!

Suppose I put 'em up the flue,
  And booze the profits, Joe? Not me.
Now ain't they utterly too-too?

I do the 'Igh Art fake, I do.
  Joe, I'm consummate; and I *see*
Them flymy little bits of Blue.

Which, Joe, is why I ses te you—
  Æsthetic-like, and limp, and free—
Now *ain't* they utterly too-too,
Them flymy little bits of Blue?

III. BALLADE

I often does a quiet read
  At Booty Shelly's † poetry;

* An adaptation of "Madonna mia."
† Probably Botticelli.

I thinks that Swinburne at a screec
  Is really almost too-too fly;
  At Signor Vagna's * harmony
I likes a merry little flutter;
  I've had at Pater many a shy;
In fact, my form's the Bloomin' Utter.

My mark's a tidy little feed,
  And 'Enry Irving's gallery,
To see old 'Amlick do a bleed,
  And Ellen Terry on the die,
  Or Franky's ghostes at hi-spy,†
And parties carried on a shutter.‡
  Them vulgar Coupeaus is my eye!
In fact, my form's the Bloomin' Utter.

The Grosvenor's nuts—it is, indeed!
  I goes for 'Olman 'Unt like pie.
It's equal to a friendly lead
  To see B. Jones's judes go by.
  Stanhope he makes me fit to cry.
Whistler he makes me melt like butter.
  Strudwick he makes me flash my cly—
In fact, my form's the Bloomin' Utter.

ENVOY

  I'm on for any Art that's 'Igh;
I talks as quite as I can splutter;
  I keeps a Dado on the sly;
In fact, my form's the Bloomin' Utter!

W. E. Henley

* Wagner(?).
† This seems to be a reference to *The Corsican Brothers.*
‡ *Richard III.*(?).

VILLON'S STRAIGHT TIP TO ALL CROSS COVES

"Tout aux tavernes et aux filles."

Suppose you screeve? or go cheap-jack?
  Or fake the broads? or fig a nag?
Or thimble-rig? or knap a yack?
  Or pitch a snide? or smash a rag?
  Suppose you duff? or nose and lag?
Or get the straight, and land your pot?
  How do you melt the multy swag?
Booze and the blowens cop the lot.

Fiddle, or fence, or mace, or mack;
  Or moskeneer, or flash the drag;
Dead-lurk a crib, or do a crack;
  Pad with a slang, or chuck a fag;
  Bonnet, or tout, or mump and gag;
Rattle the tats, or mark the spot;
  You can not bank a single stag;
Booze and the blowens cop the lot.

Suppose you try a different tack,
  And on the square you flash your flag?
At penny-a-lining make your whack,
  Or with the mummers mug and gag?
  For nix, for nix the dibbs you bag!
At any graft, no matter what,
  Your merry goblins soon stravag:
Booze and the blowens cop the lot.

THE MORAL

  It's up the spout and Charley Wag
With wipes and tickers and what not.
  Until the squeezer nips your scrag,
Booze and the blowens cop the lot.

W. E. Henley

A BURLESQUE RONDO

Cum tu, Lydia, Telephi
Cervicem roseam, cerea Telephi.—Horace. Book I: Ode 13

Cum tu, Lydia . . . You know the rest—
Praising the waxen arms and breast
  Of Telephus you drove me mad.
  You made the sunniest moments sad,
While tortures racked my heaving chest.

Oh, I could see you softly dressed,
Inciting him with amorous zest;
  And hear you whisper low, "My lad,
    Come to Lydia."

Now you repent . . . Your arms protest
That they have been too roughly pressed.
  Oh, gain your senses; leave the cad,
    And heed me as again I add:
Awake! Love is no giddy jest.
    Come to! Lydia!

Louis Untermeyer

A RONDEAU OF REMORSE

Unhappy, I observe the Ass,
Who browses placidly on grass,
  Or bits of wood he will devour,
  While e'en the prickly thistle-flower
Is spicing for his garden-sass.

Last night that lovely golden mass
She called a "rarebit" proved but brass;
  And life I gazed at through a sour
    Unhappy eye!

And as this sleepless night I pass
I learn that he who has, alas!

An ass's judgment for his dower
May lack the beast's digestive power.
Oh, miserie! All flesh is grass!
Unhappy I!

Burges Johnson

THE POET BETRAYED *

Heinrich Heine and Clinton Scollard Construct a Rondeau

Immortal eyes, why do they never die?
They come between me and the cheerful sky
And take the place of every sphinx-like star.
They haunt me always, always; and they mar
The comfort of my sleek tranquillity.

In dreams you lean your cheek on mine and sigh;
And all the old, caressing words float by.
They haunt me always, always; yet they are
Immortal lies.

Oh, love of mine, half-queen, half-butterfly,
Your tore my soul to hear its dying cry,
And soiled my purpose with a deathless scar.
Go then, my broken songs, go near and far
And woman's love and her inconstancy
Immortalize.

Louis Untermeyer

THE PASSIONATE ÆSTHETE TO HIS LOVE *

Andrew Lang and Oscar Wilde turn a Nursery Rhyme into a *Rondeau Redoublé.*

Curly-locks, Curly-locks, wilt thou be mine?
Thou shalt not wash dishes nor yet feed the swine,

* From —*and Other Poets*, by Louis Untermeyer. Copyright 1916, Henry Holt and Company, Publishers.

But sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam,
And feast upon strawberries, sugar and cream.

Curly-locks, Curly-locks, brighten and beam
  Joyous assent with a rapturous sign;
Hasten the Vision—quicken the Dream—
  Curly-locks, Curly-locks, wilt thou be mine?

Curly-locks, Curly-locks; come, do not deem
  Thou needst not be mindful of sheep or of kine;
Thou shalt not peel onions nor cook them in steam,
  Thou shalt not wash dishes nor yet feed the swine.

Curly-locks, Curly-locks, thou shalt recline
  Languid and limp by a silvery stream;
Thou shalt not grieve though the world is malign,
  But sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam.

Curly-locks, Curly-locks, oft as we dine
  I shall read verses of mine—ream upon ream;
Whilst thou shalt applaud me with, "Ah, that is fine,"
  And feast upon strawberries, sugar and cream.

Come, while the days are all laughter and shine;
  Come, while the nights are all silence and gleam:
Youth is a goblet; Love is the wine;
  And Life is a lyric that has but one theme:
    "Curly-locks—Curly-locks!"

Louis Untermeyer

BEHOLD THE DEEDS!

(Chant Royal)

[Being the Plaint of Adolphe Culpepper Ferguson, Salesman of Fancy Notions, held in durance of his Landlady for a failure to connect on Saturday night.]

I

I would that all men my hard case might know;
How grievously I suffer for no sin:
I, Adolphe Culpepper Ferguson, for lo!
I, of my landlady am lockèd in,
For being short on this sad Saturday,
Nor having shekels of silver wherewith to pay;
She has turned and is departed with my key;
Wherefore, not even as other boarders free,
I sing (as prisoners to their dungeon stones
When for ten days they expiate a spree):
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

II

One night and one day have I wept my woe;
Nor wot I when the morrow doth begin,
If I shall have to write to Briggs & Co.,
To pray them to advance the requisite tin
For ransom of their salesman, that he may
Go forth as other boarders go alway—
As those I hear now flocking from their tea,
Led by the daughter of my landlady
Piano-ward. This day for all my moans,
Dry bread and water have been servèd me.
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

III

Miss Amabel Jones is musical, and so
  The heart of the young he-boardèr doth win,
Playing "The Maiden's Prayer," *adagio*—
  That fetcheth him, as fetcheth the banco skin
The innocent rustic. For my part, I pray:
That Badarjewska maid may wait for aye
  Ere sits she with a lover, as did we
Once sit together, Amabel! Can it be
  That all that arduous wooing not atones
For Saturday shortness of trade dollars three?
  Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

IV

Yea! she forgets the arm was wont to go
  Around her waist. She wears a buckle whose pin
Galleth the crook of the young man's elbòw;
  I forget not, for I that youth have been.
Smith was aforetime the Lothario gay.
Yet once, I mind me, Smith was forced to stay
  Close in his room. Not calm, as I, was he;
But his noise brought no pleasaunce, verily.
  Small ease he gat of playing on the bones,
Or hammering on his stove-pipe, that I see.
  Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

V

Thou, for whose fear the figurative crow
  I eat, accursed be thou and all thy kin!
Thee will I show up—yea, up will I show
  Thy too thick buckwheats, and thy tea too thin.
Ay! here I dare thee, ready for the fray!
Thou dost *not* "keep a first-class house," I say!
  It does not with the advertisements agree.

Thou lodgest a Briton with a puggaree,
  And thou hast harboured Jacobses and Cohns,
Also a Mulligan. Thus denounce I thee!
  Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

ENVOY

Boarders! the worst I have not told to ye:
She hath stolen my trousers, that I may not flee
  Privily by the window. Hence these groans,
There is no fleeing in a *robe de nuit.*
  Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

H. C. Bunner

CHANT ROYAL OF THE DEJECTED DIPSOMANIAC
(To Hal Steed)

Some fools keep ringing the dumb-waiter bell
Just as I finish killing Uncle Ned;
I wonder if they could have heard him yell?
A moment since I cursed at them and said:
"This is a pretty time to bring the ice!"
—Old Uncle Ned! Two times of late, or thrice,
I've thought of prodding him with something keen,
But always Fate has seemed to intervene;
Last night, for instance, I was in the mood,
But I was far too drunken yestere'en—
My way of life can end in nothing good!

At Mrs. Dumple's, last week, when I fell
And spoiled her dinner party I was led
Out to a cab; they saw I was not well
And took me home and tucked me into bed.
I should quit mingling hashish with my rice!
I should give over singing "Three Blind Mice"
At funerals! Why *will* I make a scene?
Why *should* I feed my cousins Paris Green?
I am increasingly misunderstood:
When I am tactless, people think 'tis spleen.
My way of life can end in nothing good.

Why *should* one cry that he is William Tell,
Then flip a pippin from his hostess' head
That none but he can see? Why *should* one dwell
Upon the failings of the newly wed
At wedding breakfasts? *Can* I not be Nice?
I am so silly and so full of vice!
Such prestidigitator tricks, I ween,
As finding false teeth in a soup tureen
Are not real humour; they are crass and crude,
And cast suspicion on the host's cuisine:
My way of life can end in nothing good.

My wife and her best friend, a social swell,
Zoo-ward I lured to see the cobras fed;—
"We can't get home," I giggled, "for the El
Is broken, Sarah—let's elope, instead!"
I spoke of all she'd have to sacrifice,
And she seemed yielding to me, once or twice,
Until my wife broke in and said, "Eugene,
Your finger nails are seldom really clean;—
I'd loose poor Sarah's hand, Eugene, I would!"
How weak and stupid I have always been!
My way of life can end in nothing good.

I drink and doze and wake and think of hell,
My eyes are blear from all the tears I shed:
I'm pitiably bald: I'm but a shell!
I sobbed to-day, "I *wish* that I were dead!"
I wish I *could* quit drugs and drink and dice.
I wish I had not talked of chicken lice
The Sunday that we entertained the Dean,
Nor shouted to his wife that paraffin
Would make her thin beard grow, nor played the food
Was pennies and her face a slot machine:
My way of life can end in nothing good.

—That bell again. A voice: "Is your name Bryce?
These goods is C. O. D. Send down the price!"
"Bryce lives," I yell, "at Number Seventeen!"
Bryce *doesn't* live there, but I feel so mean

I laugh and lie; my tone is harsh and rude.
—Uncle is gone! I'm phthisical and lean—
My way of life can end in nothing good!

Don Marquis

THE SESTINA OF THE MINOR POET

Critics have damned our calling, since the sun
  First rose to tip Achilles' spear with light:
One wonders how the little that is done
  Ever survives even a summer night;
And we—we wonder more than any one
  Why minor poets ever strive to write.

What use is it to wonder? We must write
  Whether we will or no. Under the sun
God keeps a little sacred flame alight
  E'en in the mind of this unable one,
Though Critic Death ring down in dreamless night
  A curtain on so many things undone,

And many wasted hours and ill things done,—
  Not only in bright day, but in dark night,
A meanness hidden from the genial sun;
  Wherefore 'tis always difficult to write
And to God's mercy testify, when one
  Has been conspirator against the light.

Poets, I think, do mostly love the light,
  And scrawl sestinas to the dying sun,
When haply they have skill enough to write—
  Sighing to think how the sun-god is done
To death by the returning wheel of night. . . .
  Yet night they woo as much as anyone.

With every bawd and ruffler they are one,
  And little credit find they with the light

When through the morning window streams the
sun. . . .
I fear me 'tis on water that they write:
On soda water epics have been done
More lasting than the lyrics overnight!

Yet there is grace in sleep; and sometimes night
May bring to solace some unhappy one
Dreams sent by God to make, in darkness, light:
With but a spark of hope, much may be done:
And even poets may contrive to write
Something to last a little in the Sun.

There was a helpful humor in the Sun.
And yet—how hard these verses were to write
Will scarcely be believed by anyone!

Norman Davey

"HE COLLECTED HIS THOUGHTS"

"He collected his thoughts," said the tome,
A statement that left me perplexed,
For there wasn't a thought in his dome.
"He collected his thoughts," said the tome.
How could he, with Nobody Home,
As is perfectly plain from the text?
"He collected his thoughts," said the tome,
A statement that left me perplexed!

Edward Anthony

"SUCH STUFF AS DREAMS"

Jenny kiss'd me in a dream;
So did Elsie, Lucy, Cora,
Bessie, Gwendolyn, Eupheme,
Alice, Adelaide, and Dora.
Say of honor I'm devoid,
Say monogamy has missed me,
But don't say to Dr. Freud
Jenny kissed me.

Franklin P. Adams

NOCTURNE *

I cannot read, I cannot rest;
  I only hear the mournful Muse.
A wan moon staggers in the West,
I cannot read, I cannot rest. . . .
Below, a lonely feline pest
  Makes the night loud with amorous views.
I cannot read—I cannot rest!
  I only hear the mournful mews.

Louis Untermeyer

EPITAPH FOR A DESERVING LADY

She never wrote a book,
  She wasn't literary.
She stayed an honest cook,
She never wrote a book,
Contented not to look
  Beyond the culinary.
She never wrote a book!
  She wasn't literary!

Edward Anthony

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ADAPTATIONS

RONDEL

François Villon, 1460

Good-bye! the tears are in my eyes;
  Farewell, farewell, my prettiest;
  Farewell, of women born the best;
Good-bye! the saddest of good-byes.
Farewell! with many vows and sighs
  My sad heart leaves you to your rest;
Farewell! the tears are in my eyes;
Farewell! from you my miseries
  Are more than now may be confessed,
  And most by thee have I been blessed,
Yea, and for thee have wasted sighs;
Good-bye! the last of my good-byes.

Andrew Lang

SPRING

Charles D'Orléans, 1391–1465

The new-liveried year.—*Sir Henry Wotton.*

The year has changed his mantle cold
  Of wind, of rain, of bitter air;
And he goes clad in cloth of gold,
  Of laughing suns and season fair;
No bird or beast of wood or wold
  But doth with cry or song declare
The year lays down his mantle cold.
All founts, all rivers, seaward rolled,

The pleasant summer livery wear,
With silver studs on broidered vair;
The world puts off its raiment old,
The year lays down his mantle cold.

Andrew Lang

REGRETS *

A Rondel

You would not hear me speak; you never knew,
Will never know, the eloquence unique
It was my purpose to bestow on you;
You would not hear me speak.

Dear! it was no caprice, or idle freak:
Perhaps I did not even mean to woo:
My meaning was not very far to seek:
I might have gained the end I had in view;
I might have failed, since words are often weak;
It never can be settled now: adieu!
You would not hear me speak.

J. K. Stephen

ARCADIANS CONFER IN EXILE *

After CHARLES GARNIER

I

So long ago it was! Nay, is it true
In verity we passed a month or so
In Arcady when life and love were new
So long ago?

The tide of time's indomitable flow,
Augmenting, rears a drearier realm, whereto
We twain are exiled. Yet . . . I do not know . . .
Now that a woman calls, whose eyes are blue,

* This poem belongs in the division in which roundels are included.

Whose speech is gracious—strangely sweet and low
She calls, and smiles as STELLA used to do
So long ago.

II

I am not fit to follow; yet I pray
Some mighty task be set me, to commit
In her dear name, for trifles to essay
I am not fit.

Nay, I, unstable and bereft of wit—
Even I!—return to my old love to-day,
Whose bounty is so fond and infinite
That I am heartened, and made strong, and may
Not even falter in deserving it,
If but for dread lest of such grace men say
I am not fit.

III

Time has changed naught in us; for now the din
And darkness of tempestuous years, that wrought
So vainly, lift; and it is lightly seen
Time has changed naught.

Such knowledge of those brawling years I bought:
The thing which shall be is that which has been,
When heaven again surprises us, unsought,
And life returns full circle; and we win
Again to realms which with how little thought
We ceded, and find loyalty wherein
Time has changed naught.

IV

Sweetheart, I wait; now, as in time gone by,
Your suppliant, half-frightened, half-elate,
Outside the trellised doors of Arcady,
Sweetheart, I wait.

Again I glimpse its meadows—through a grate,
Alas!—and streams and groves and cloudless sky;
And cry to you to be compassionate,—
Yea, as of old to STELLA, now I cry
To you that once were STELLA; and my fate
Attends your piloting, for whose reply,
Sweetheart, I wait.

James Branch Cabell

RONDEAU

Jenny kissed me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put *that* in:
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have missed me,
Say I'm growing old, but add,
Jenny kissed me!

Leigh Hunt

HIS MOTHER'S SERVICE TO OUR LADY

(*François Villon*)

Lady of Heaven and earth, and therewithal
Crowned Empress of the nether clefts of Hell,—
I, thy poor Christian, on thy name do call,
Commending me to thee, with thee to dwell,
Albeit in nought I be commendable.
But all mine undeserving may not mar
Such mercies as thy sovereign mercies are;
Without the which (as true words testify)
No soul can reach thy Heaven so fair and far.
Even in this faith I choose to live and die.

Unto thy Son say thou that I am His,
And to me graceless make Him gracious.
Sad Mary of Egypt lacked not of that bliss,
Nor yet the sorrowful clerk Theophilus,

Whose bitter sins were set aside even thus
Though to the Fiend his bounden service was.
Oh, help me, lest in vain for me should pass
(Sweet Virgin that shalt have no loss thereby!)
The blessed Host and sacring of the Mass.
Even in this faith I choose to live and die.

A pitiful poor woman, shrunk and old,
I am, and nothing learn'd in letter-lore.
Within my parish-cloister I behold
A painted Heaven where harps and lutes adore,
And eke an Hell whose damned folk seethe full sore:
One bringeth fear, the other joy to me.
That joy, great Goddess, make thou mine to be,—
Thou of whom all must ask it even as I;
And that which faith desires, that let it see.
For in this faith I choose to live and die.

O excellent Virgin Princess! thou didst bear
King Jesus, the most excellent comforter,
Who even of this our weakness craved a share
And for our sake stooped to us from on high,
Offering to death His young life sweet and fair.
Such as He is, Our Lord, I Him declare,
And in this faith I choose to live and die.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

THE BALLAD OF DEAD LADIES

(*François Villon*)

Tell me now in what hidden way is
Lady Flora the lovely Roman?
Where's Hipparchia, and where is Thais,
Neither of them the fairer woman?
Where is Echo, beheld of no man,
Only heard on river and mere,—
She whose beauty was more than human? . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Where's Héloise, the learned nun,
  For whose sake Abeillard, I ween,
Lost manhood and put priesthood on?
  (From Love he won such dule and teen!)
  And where, I pray you, is the Queen
Who willed that Buridan should steer
  Sewed in a sack's mouth down the Seine? . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

White Queen Blanche, like a queen of lilies,
  With a voice like any mermaiden,—
Bertha Broadfoot, Beatrice, Alice,
  And Ermengarde the lady of Maine,—
  And that good Joan whom Englishmen
At Rouen doomed and burned her there,—
  Mother of God, where are they then? . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Nay, never ask this week, fair lord,
  Where they are gone, nor yet this year,
Except with this for an overword,—
  But where are the snows of yester-year?

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

I WONDER IN WHAT ISLE OF BLISS

I wonder in what Isle of Bliss
  Apollo's music fills the air;
In what green valley Artemis
  For young Endymion spreads the snare;
Where Venus lingers debonair:
  The Wind has blown them all away—
And Pan lies piping in his lair—
  Where are the Gods of Yesterday?

Say where the great Semiramis
  Sleeps in a rose-red tomb; and where
The precious dust of Cæsar is,
  Or Cleopatra's yellow hair:

Where Alexander Do-and-Dare;
  The Wind has blown them all away—
And Redbeard of the Iron Chair;
  Where are the Dreams of Yesterday?

Where is the Queen of Herod's kiss,
  And Phyrne in her beauty bare;
By what strange sea does Tomyris
  With Dido and Cassandra share
Divine Proserpina's despair;
  The Wind has blown them all away—
For what poor Ghost does Helen care?
  Where are the Girls of Yesterday?

Alas for lovers! Pair by pair
  The Wind has blown them all away:
The young and yare, the fond and fair:
  Where are the Snows of Yesterday?

Justin Huntley McCarthy

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